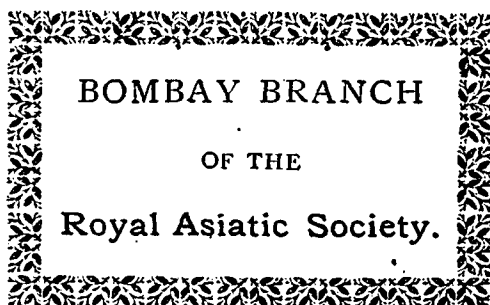


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TRAVELS

IN THE

WESTERN HEBRIDES:

FROM 1782 TO 1790.

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BY THE

REV. JOHN LANE BUCHANAN, A. M.

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CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. C. J. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-
ROW; AND J. DEBRET, OPPOSITE TO BURLINGTON
HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

1793.

PRICE 3s. 6d.





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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may be proper to apprise the reader, or rather those whom I wish to become readers, that the subject of this little volume is not those Islands that lie near to the coast of Scotland, but the *Western Æbudæ*; a long chain of islands a whole degree farther advanced in the Atlantic Ocean: seldom visited, and their interior œconomy, the situation, circumstances, and character of the people never before described by any modern traveller, except, in a very summary manner, by Donald Monro, quoted and followed by *George Buchanan*, in his
History

History of Scotland. I have been advised to give it the title of Travels, because the remarks it contains are the result of many voyages and journies, performed for a long series of years: although I have avoided the *tædium* of a long chain of dates, movements, and other circumstances of no consequence.

What I have written, I well know, will give offence to many petty tyrants: but I am actuated by motives of humanity, and of duty to the common Parent and Lord of all mankind. And I thank God, who has given me grace to speak the truth with boldness, notwithstanding the menaces of certain unprincipled oppressors.

If any person shall think proper publicly to controvert the truth of any of the facts I have asserted, I request that he may subscribe his name to what he

may write : in which case I will support my assertion, by producing the evidence on which I made it : but if it shall be made to appear, that I was in any instance misled, I will acknowledge my error.---To anonymous writing I shall not pay the smallest regard or attention.

I once intended to add, as an Appendix to this little Work, a Refutation of Mr. Pinkerton's outrageous calumnies against the Celts in general, and the ancient Scots and modern Highlanders in particular. This has been delayed for the present, on account of certain unavoidable circumstances, unnecessary to be mentioned. But, the Public may expect to see it soon in another Publication.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE distance of that part of the Hebrides called the Long Island, comprehending Lewis, Harris, both the Uists, Barray, and other small Isles, and the dangers of a voyage among islands, advanced to the distance of 70 miles from the main land of Scotland in a tempestuous ocean, account for the general ignorance of the manners, customs, characters, and political situation of those wild and distant regions: which have of late been brought under the public eye, chiefly by the misfortunes of the inhabitants. Though several travellers have visited Skye, Mull, Isla, Jura, and other islands of smaller extent, skirting the western shores of the main land, we have never yet had any written accounts of the Long Island, or rather chain.

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chain of Islands ; or, at least, any accounts relating to the domestic and political situation of the inhabitants. This indeed, is at present most deplorable: the relief of emigration, offered to some, being denied to the far greater number by extreme poverty; and a petty tyranny, arising from immemorial usages established in times of feudal oppression, and their singular and remote situation, which secludes the miserable natives of the Western Hebrides from the benign influence of the British laws and government. A right avails nothing without a remedy. The poor Hebridean, as well as the Highland cottager in the more sequestered parts of North-Britain, would find it impossible to effect, if he had courage to attempt, emancipation and independence on the tacksmen, and petty lairds or landholders, who keep them in subjection. I say petty lairds and tacksmen, for with regard to the great proprietors of land and sea-coast in those parts, Lord Macdonald,
Mr.

Mr. Humberstone Mackenzie, Captain Macleod of Harris, Mr. Macdonald of Boisdale, and a few other gentlemen of large estates, they have given undoubted proofs of a disposition to protect the great body of the poor people against their immediate superiors and oppressors; by encouraging general industry, which cannot exist without liberty, or, in other words, without justice. But it too often, and indeed for the most part happens, that non-residence, and various avocations, on the part of the great landholders, afford opportunities to the tacksmen, among whom their estates are divided, by leasehold, in large lots, or rather districts, to conceal the real state of affairs from the distant chief, and to enter into such combinations, as at once, in fact, frustrate the good intentions of those chiefs, and defy the free genius of the British constitution. The land is parcelled out in small portions, by the tacksmen, among the immediate cultivators of the soil,

who pay their rent in kind, and in personal services. Though the tacksmen, for the most part, enjoy their leases of whole districts on liberal terms, their exactions from the subtenants, are in general most severe. They grant them their possessions only from year to year : and, lest they should forget their dependent condition, they are every year, at a certain term, with the most regular formality, warned to quit their tenements, and to go out of the bounds of the leasehold estate. The subtenant, by what presents he can command, or by humble supplications, endeavours to work on the mind of the tacksmen, and, on any condition he pleases to impose, to retain a home for himself, his wife and children; for he has no other resource. And here I am to disclose to the English nation, as well, I hope, as the greater part of the Scotch, and to the whole world, a matter of fact, which cannot fail to excite a very general sympathy and

and concern for a sober, harmless, and much injured people.

It is an invariable custom, and established by a kind of tacit compact among the tacksmen and inferior lairds, to refuse, with the most invincible obduracy, an asylum, on their ground, to any subtenant without the recommendation of his landlord: or, as he is very properly called in those parts, his MASTER.* The wretched out-cast, therefore, has no alternative, but to sink down into the situation and rank of

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So inveterate are the remains of feudal slavery in Scotland, that MASTER is for the most part the term used for landlord. Mr. Kemp, a minister, in a sermon preached before the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at their anniversary meeting in the High Church of Edinburgh, June 5, 1788, on the subject of the character of the late Earl of Kinnoull, calls him, in relation to his tenants, their MASTER. It was impossible for the Scotch orator to divest himself of the idea, that even the good and generous Kinnoull was not the landlord but the MASTER of his tenants, in the very sentence in which he considers us "free-born Britons." See Kemp's Sermons and Facts, page 117.

an unfortunate and numerous class of men known under the name of SCALLAGS.

The scallag, whether male or female, is a poor being, who, for mere subsistence, becomes a predial slave to another, whether a subtenant, a tacksmán, or a laird. The scallag builds his own hut with fods and boughs of trees; and if he is sent from one part of the country to another, he moves off his sticks, and, by means of these, forms a new hut in another place. He is however, in most places, encouraged by the possession of the walls of a hut, which he covers in the best way he can with his old sticks, stubble, and fern. Five days in the week he works for his master: the sixth is allowed to himself, for the cultivation of some scrap of land, on the edge of some moss or moor: on which he raises a little kail, or cole-worts, barley, and potatoes. These articles, boiled up together in one mash, and often without salt, are his only
2 food;

food; except in those seasons and days when he can catch some fish, which he is also obliged not unfrequently to eat without bread or salt. The only bread he tastes is a cake made of the flour of barley. He is allowed coarse shoes, with tartan hose, and a coarse coat, with a blanket or two for clothing. It may occur to an English reader, that, as the scallag works only five days out of seven to his master, he has two to provide for himself. But it is to be recollected, that throughout the whole of Scotland and all its appendages, as well as in the opposite countries of Iceland to the north, and Norway and Denmark to the east, Sunday, or the Sabbath, as it is called in all those countries, is celebrated by a total cessation from all labour, and all amusements too, as well as by religious exercises.

Although the Western Hebrides lie beyond the route pursued by the most distinguished

guished travellers from the south, who have published accounts of their travels and voyages, (Mr. Pennant, Dr. Johnson, and Captain Newte) several gentlemen, have visited most of those remote islands, with a view of acquiring such local knowledge as might enable them to employ the people in a fishing trade, or other industry: though none of them ever touched on the horrid island of Harris. But the want of time, and their not being able to converse with the common people, who know no other language than the Celtic, and who alone could, or would point out their grievances in their native colours, the benevolent purpose of those gentlemen was, in a great measure, frustrated. The tacksmen, with whom they conversed, and their own factors, had an interest in concealing some truths, the knowledge of which might have equally benefited the independent freeholders, and the great body of the labouring people.

The Writer of the following notes, whose commission from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, from 1782 to 1791, gave him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the actual situation of affairs in the Western Hebrides, trusts, that he will do no disservice, but on the contrary promote the interests of both the chiefs and the natives at large, by disclosing scenes industriously concealed from the eye of the benevolent Landholder, as well as of the inquisitive stranger: in the hope that humanity and sound policy may devise some means for alleviating the miseries, and converting, to both public and private advantage, the industry of a sober, harmless, and ingenious, but ill-treated people. The picture, on the whole, will be a melancholy one, but here and there relieved by some curious manners and customs, and some particulars in natural history.--- The Author could never boast of any elegance of style in composition: but this, such as it was, has not, he is very sensible, been improved

improved by wandering about for nine years, where he very seldom heard or conversed in any other tongue than the Celtic. He has set down some things, as he heard them in this language; not knowing how to give their full meaning in English.

TRAVELS

IN THE

WESTERN HEBRIDES.

CHAP. I.

A Description of the Western Hebrides.

THIS great ridge of islands runs in a parallel line with the main land of Scotland, from Barray-head, the southernmost point of the Island distinguished by that name, to Nish, the northern point of Lewis, about 180 miles in extent; and, in breadth, from 5 miles to 20. The whole of this vast ridge of isles, which is fully stocked with inhabitants, is divided into eight parishes: in which there are, besides the parish churches, three stations for Clerical Missioners supported by the royal bounty.

The

The western sides of Barray and Uist are flat and sandy: the eastern, mountainous, and full of mosses and rugged rocks. The inland parts are interspersed with fresh-water lakes, and these plentifully stocked with fish. There are several small rivers, in the mouths of which there is plenty of salmon, falling for the most part into the western seas.

The lesser Islands of Boreray, Berneray, Pabbay, Ensay, and Caillegray, are, for the most part, covered with shelly-sand, which, towards the shores, is drifted by the winds into great hills. Even in these small Isles, there are fresh-water lakes, full of fish.

The Long Island, comprehending Lewis and Harris, is in length, from north to south, about 90 miles. Harris the Southern is divided from Lewis the Northern by a tremendous ridge of very high mountains, abounding with deer, which until the game laws were vigorously enforced by the proprietor, were considered as common property. The whole face of Harris is singularly rugged and forbidding, being surrounded and intersected
with

with rocks, marshes, mountains, hills of shelly sand; and lashed and stunned on the west and north with the tremendous roar of the fierce Atlantic Ocean. In this island there are several fresh-water lakes, as well as considerable rivers, stored with trout and salmon.

The east side of Lewis consists in rocks, mountains, marshes, and lakes, from four miles to ten in length; but from Stornaway by Graish, to the northern extremity, it is, on the whole, though here and there interspersed with hills, both beautiful and fertile. Here the soil is either pure moss, or moss intermixed with sand and earth, or a mixture of sand and earth without any moss. It produces plentiful crops of barley and potatoes, and in some parts, of oats and rye.—This part of Lewis is passable for foot as well as horsemen. But in most places the least vestige of a tract or path is not to be discerned: so that, what little intercourse takes place in this rugged island, is carried on by means of boats, on the rivers, lakes, and morasses when covered by water. Near the coast of Lewis and Harris lie the two Berneras,

neras, composed of moss and sand, and several smaller islands, of the same kind of soil, as Pabbay-scarpe, Taransay, Haifgear, &c. all of them fertile, especially, as throughout the whole of the Hebrides, and other countries, when manured with sea vegetables or weeds.

The whole west side of Uist, being plain and sandy, is extremely pleasant to ride through; but attended with danger to strangers and such as are overtaken by liquor; on account of fords over which the sea flows from east to west so rapidly, and which are at the same time of such extent, that an active horse or footman will hardly gain the further side, before the tide has filled up some one or other of the many small hollow channels of rivulets he has to cross.

Benbecula, or Nun-toun, the seat of Clanronald, becomes an island twice in 24 hours: and those immense fords resemble large seas over which considerable vessels, at certain seasons, may sail with safety. The whole of this country is unfavourable to wood of almost all kinds, which creeps along the earth: as the juniper, thorns, and all kinds of natural

tural brush-wood, mountain-ash, wild vines, hyſop, nay, even apple and pear, and plumb trees, with goſeberry and currant buſhes, though ſurrounded by high garden walls, muſt keep their heads below; and fruits ſeldom arrive at perfection, though tenderly cultivated and ſecured from ſtorms.

All kinds of greens or garden roots, uſed over Britain, are planted in gentlemen's gardens, and ſome of them with ſucceſs. In Uift there is a kind of natural kail, or colewort, called *morran*, that grows by the ſea-ſide: with long graſs called *bent*, uſed in making ſacks, ropes, and other implements of huſbandry. There is alſo another root called *rue*, that the common people once uſed for dying woollen yarn red; but ſtrictly prohibited of late, for fear of making a paſſage for the wind to blow away the ſand, and diſfigure the face of the fields. A nourishing root is commonly dug up by the poor, in time of ſcarcity, out of the arable lands, called *brisgean*, or wild ſherratt, and when boiled, answers the purpoſe of bread or potatoes: they are alſo prohibited from this as much as poſſible. Digging or opening the lands for theſe roots
expoſes

exposes the field to be blown away by the drift. Here are carmille roots, wild carrots, baldmony, hemlock, heath, rushes, strawberries, black-berries, cranberries, juniper-berries, and several other wild fruits.

But no broom, whins, or thorns, will thrive here. There are plenty of peats and turf for fire over all the isles.

The species of land and sea fowls over all this country are too many to be mentioned in so limited a work as this. Tarmachans, plowers, black-birds, starlings (or druiddan) red muir-cocks and hens, ducks and wild geese, by thousands, particularly on the plains of South Uist and elsewhere; wood-cocks, snipes, ravens, carrion crows, herons, bats, owls, all kinds of hawks and eagles, so large and strong, that they carry off lambs, kids, fawns, and the weaker kinds of sheep and foals. They have been known to attack even cows, horses, and stags. And their nests are frequently found to be plentifully supplied with fish, which, in what are called plays of fish, they pick up from the surface of the sea.

A species

A species of robbery, equally singular and cruel, was lately practised in this country very commonly, and sometimes at this day, in which the eagles are the principal actors. The thieves, coming upon the eaglets in their nests, in the absence of their dams, sow up the extremity of the great gut: so that the poor creatures, tortured by obstructions, express their sense of pain in frequent and loud screams. The eagle, imagining their cries to proceed from hunger, is unwearied in the work of bringing in fresh prey, to satisfy, as she thinks, their craving appetites. But all that spoil is carried home by the thieves at night, when they come to give a momentary relief to the eaglet, for the purpose of prolonging, for their own base ends, their miserable existence. This infernal practice is now wearing fast away, being strictly watched by the gentlemen, and severely punished. Mr. Mackenzie, for every eagle killed in Lewis, gives half a crown. One of those large eagles was taken in the Isle of Herries, at Tarbert, together with a large turbot, in which the animal had fastened its talons, when asleep, at the surface of the water, so as not to be able to disengage them.

The

The eagle, with his large wings expanded like sails, drove before the wind, into the harbour, where he was taken alive; his feet being entangled in the turbot by the country people.

Birds of passage, of several kinds, are seen over all the Isles: swans, cuckoos, swallows, lapwings, plovers, &c. and wild fowls of several kinds, rendered tame, are to be seen about the yards, dunghills, and doors of houses, among the poultry.

The *Bishop Carara*, or *Bunubhuachil*, is larger than any goose, of a brown colour, the inside of the wing white, the bill long and broad. It dives quicker than any other bird. It was never known to fly, the wings being too short to carry a weight seldom under, but often above sixteen pounds.

The *Black Cormorant* is not held in much estimation by the Islanders; but such as have white feathers in their wings, and white down on their bodies, are famous for making soup or broth of a very delicate taste and flavour.

The

The Western Hebrides abound in soland-geese, sea-gulls, and finging-ducks, of a size somewhat less than that of common ducks. They are constantly employed either in diving for sand-eels, which are of a speckled colour like leeches, or in fitting together in flocks, and finging, which is heard at the distance of half a mile, and is accounted very pleasing music.

The duck, called the *Crawgiabh*, is larger than a Muscovy duck, and almost tame: you may approach very near it before it takes wing; and is frequently kept by gentlemen among their other poultry.

Rain Goose. This fowl is always heard, at a great distance, before a storm. It is almost as large as a goose.

Drillechan, or Water Magpie. This bird is larger than a land magpie, beautifully speckl'd, with a long, sharp, and strong bill, red as blood. It never swims, but flies from place to place, following the ebb, picking up spout-fish. They are silent during the flow of the tide,

tide, and begin to whistle the moment it turns.

Sbiltachan. This kind of sea plover never goes far out at sea, but runs about the sandy coast, and follows every surge to pick up eels or spout-fish. They are speckled and small, but very long legged. Their pipes are extremely shrill. They are eatable; though too trifling to be shot, when much better game is found in so great plenty.

All gregarious birds, whether great or small, commonly sound an alarm, in case they see any bird, even of a different species, in danger, from man, otters, seal, or any other animal.

Starnags. This bird appears in spring, on these coasts, about the size of a hawk, with long sharp pointed wings, extremely noisy and daring. They are speckled, but the prevailing colour is white.

Fasgatar. This bird is of blackish blue, as large as a hawk, and is constantly pursuing the Starnags through the air, to force them

them to throw out of their mouths whatever they have eaten; and the vile creatures catch every atom of what the others throw out, before it reaches the water. It will sometimes venture to sit on any boat, if the passengers have provisions, and throw out any, by way of encouraging its approaches.

Wild Doves. Every cave and clift is full of wild doves.

Sheep. The sheep are of various colours, as black, grey, dun, and party-coloured; many of them with four horns.

Cows, horses, goats, and deer, are here in great plenty. Also, pole-cats, or metterick. This animal is almost as large as a cat, and very destructive to the young kids: it cuts their throats, and sucks the blood. Its bite is hurtful to cows and horses. The skin is as smooth as any fur, and of a brown colour.

There are weasels to be met with, and conies; in different islands. Serpents have been dug up in great clusters, quite benumbed

and seemingly dead, in winter, particularly in Harris: few people, however, have suffered from their bites.

There are no *foxes*, *moles*, or *hares*, over all the Long Isle; nor *ferrets*, *partridges*, *black-cocks*, nor many of the granavirous fowls; a strong proof that grain has not been long sown here, and that the country has not been so thoroughly cultivated, as to entice them to reside in it.

Otters and *Seals* are swarming over the whole coast, and their skins and oil bring the merchants considerable profits at market.

The fish commonly used by the inhabitants are the *cuddies*, which are almost as thick on the east coasts, as the herring fry is, in their season. These are taken by hundreds, at one dipping of a bag-net, called *Tabh*, made for the purpose, *i. e.* a large hoop bound to the end of a long pole, with a pock net bound to it. The fisher throws out of his mouth fragments of boiled limpets, over the surface, where the net lies.

Shoals

Shoals of cuddies leap upon the bait, regardless of their danger, when the net is gradually raised above the water, and about them. The second year, this fish is twelve inches long. The third, they are larger still, and known by the name of Saiths. The fourth year they are called Uxes, and equal the salmon in bulk and in strength. Around these are plenty of lyths, cods, herrings, small and great ling, salmon, and trout, in Harris; but particularly in Léwis, where there are so many large and small rivers and lochs for their reception, from the one end of the country to the other. Likewise, sand-eels, lobsters, crabs, clam-shell, or scollops; oysters, wilks, periwinkles, cockles, mussels, limpets, spout-fish, leaving the surface of the sand full of their dung in little heaps; barnacles, fastened to rocks, and large logs of wood, with more kinds of shell-fish, that might be mentioned.

Dog-fish. There are swarms of dog-fish, scates, blind-fish, and the first place in Britain for herrings and large whales, basking or sun fish, turbot, mackerels, cat-fish, &c.

However unfavourable this country is to the growth of wood at present, it is evident, that there was once great plenty of it all over the islands: for the roots and trunks of large trees are found in deep mosses, bearing unequivocal impressions of fire; which make the people say, that the Norwegians burnt the wood when they were obliged to retreat from the Scottish islands and sea-coasts to their native Scandinavia.

On the east side of that vast ridge of islands, which is the subject of these notes, and on the west too of Lewis, though not of the Uists and Barray; there are a great many safe and spacious harbours, some of them large enough to receive the greatest fleets; as Loch Eriska, Loch Boisdale, Loch Maddy, Loch Finfbay, Loch Tarbet, Loch Sea-forth, Birkin Isles, Loch Stornoway: and on the west side of the Long Isle, Loch Rogue, Loch Carlovay, Loch Reafort, and Loch Leofoway, &c. These lochs are most happily situated for receiving the herrings, when driven towards the coast for shelter from storms. Shoals of them are caught here

here by the country people. As to the herring buffes, they commonly remain on the east side of Lewis, or on the coast of Scotland. But the most advantageous stations for fishings are, beyond all doubt, to be found on the western side of the Western Hebrides.

CHAP. II.

*The political State of the Western Hebrides—
The principal Proprietors—Tacksmen—Sub-
tenants—Predial Slaves, or Scallags.*

THE first landholder towards the southern extremity of this extensive ridge of Islands, is Macneil, laird over all Barray, as well as the lesser adjoining islands. Mr. Macneil generally resides on his estate, an extensive property, which he manages with equal humanity and prudence. He encourages all kinds of improvement, exercises justice among his tenants, and protects them from those oppressions, which are too common in other parts of the Hebrides. This gentleman has few or no tacksmen, except some of his own near relations, who are of too gentle and generous a disposition to abuse the confidence placed in them by their chief, by trampling on a poor, but kindred people. The minister of Barray has
but

but a small farm, in comparison of those possessed by many other clergymen in the Hebrides, who, like some other tacksmen, are too prone to treat their sub-tenants with great severity; examples of which we shall see by and by.

Mr. Macdonald of Boisdale, a great landholder, and a most honourable gentleman, seldom leaves South Uist, except on a visit to the capital, or to look after his estates in other countries. He is universally allowed to be the best farmer in the west of Scotland. He lays plans of rural œconomy before his tenants, and, by his own example, leads them, as it were, by the hand, to execute them for their own benefit. He distributes justice, and preserves peace and order among his people, like a prudent and kind master of a family, whom his household both love and esteem. The next landholder, as we advance north-ward in South Uist, is

Mr. Macdonald of Clanronald; or, as he is oftener called Clanronald, and oftener still by that of CLAN. Clan has a large estate in South Uist, besides that in Scotland, with

with Cannay, and other islands. This gentleman's family succeeded to the gallant Allan Macdonald, who lost his life in the battle of Sheriff Muir, between Crieff and Stirling, in the year 1715. The present Clan has made what is called the grand tour of Europe, is sensible and sprightly in his conversation, and endowed with a tolerable share of knowledge: but a set of interested and artful men, operating on his disposition to conviviality and facility of temper, have unfortunately led him to turn several hundreds of souls (the descendants of those kinsmen who followed his ancestors, their chief, with enthusiasm, into the field of battle) out of their possessions, and bestowed their farms, by large tracts of country, on a few favourites.

The people turned out of Clanronald's estates were substantial farmers, whose spirits were not crushed by extreme poverty, and who, having the means of transporting themselves and their families to other countries, scorned either to truckle to the favourite tacksmen, or to live longer in a land, in which their children, if not themselves,

selves, must, sooner or later, fall into the humiliating condition of scallags.---There is a notion common, not only among the common people, but also among those whose property and rank give them some influence in the government, that it is only the poorest of the people that emigrate; on which account, they think, that emigrations are the less to be regretted. They are under a great mistake. It is only people of some property, and that not inconsiderable, who can afford to transport themselves and their families to distant countries. Of

North Uist, the sole proprietor is Lord Macdonald, who is also proprietor of more than half the Isle of Skye. His estate, in Skye is of vast extent, and abounds in all the necessaries of life. His Lordship has reversed the œconomy of his kinsman, Clanronald; for, instead of dismissing the actual cultivators of the land, he has taken them under his own immediate protection, and settled them by dozens, in the room of one overgrown land-broker, or tacksmen. Yet it is justice to mention, that Lord Macdonald did not expel the tacksmen, but only

reduced their immoderate farms. His Lordship has been subjected to much unmerited obloquy. His tenants, according to their station, and in comparison of the sub-tenants of tacksmen, live in a state of affluence. It is also to be observed, that although, on the whole, his Lordship chuses to multiply industrious and contented husbandmen, rather than to support idle gentlemen, he has been known, in the choice of tenants, to give a preference to gentlemen of active turns already settled on his estate, before others, who made larger and more tempting offers for their farms. He is very attentive to the equal and prompt distribution of justice among his tenants.

The estate of Harris belongs to Mr. Macleod, at present in India. His father, Alexander Macleod, made a purchase of it from the chief of that name. That gentleman, Alex. Macleod, resided at Roudlefor some years, and spent much time and money in making piers and harbours at that place, where vessels might be stationed in safety. He repaired old churches, built new houses and repaired old ones: he brought wheels,
reels,

reels, and other implements, to begin a woollen manufactory in his village: he also encouraged a great many artificers; as shoemakers, weavers, turners, and wrights, and masons. He was also at much pains to begin roads through the country, as the first step towards improvements in any country like this, that lies in a state of nature, and discovered a sincere desire of encouraging industry among the poor people, whom he greatly pitied for their depressed and naked appearance; and whom he found not only neglected, but wantonly abused and insulted.

He made a tour around the whole back parts of his extensive estate, and even entered the huts of the tenants, and declared openly that the wigwams of the wild Indians of America were equally good, and better furnished. This gentleman was sincerely interested for the good of his people. But, after a generous struggle, for years, to bring about a regular plan of improvement among them, he found himself fighting against the stream; for the tacksmen counteracted his well intended schemes, as they understood, that the more they co-operated with him, the

the sooner their own weight in the scale would be lessened; because all his endeavours pointed towards emancipating the enslaved tenantry, which, in the end, would utterly overthrow their established system of passive obedience among the inferior class of men in all this country. That their own importance might not therefore be diminished in the end, they seldom supported him, but with reluctance, only to save appearances; so that he was known to say, before he gave up the regular system of animating the poor tenantry, that his spirits were hurt at the concealed opposition made to his well meant intentions of laying new resources open to the industrious poor, to exercise their talents, for bettering their circumstances.

But if the poor sub-tenants of Herries found little relief or consolation from the presence and benignant efforts of their good and respectable landlord, what have they to expect now that he is no more, and his successor at a distance? Nothing, surely, but additional oppression, heavier and more intolerable. While he was present they
durst

durst not act very outrageously, for they stood in some awe. Though they knew that he could not force them to relax during the run of their lease, yet there was a kind of forced reserve put on all their external actions; which, since his departure, is quite laid aside, and the case of the poor sufferers is more deplorable.

Mr. Alexander Macleod, by speaking familiarly to the poor, found out the secrets of the rich, and was astonished at the result. Had his predecessor taken this prudent step, it is thought he might have made his fortune at Dunvegan, without visiting the Indies; and continued proprietor of a country 36 miles in length, with the richest islands on earth in proportion to their extent, kelp and cattle included, with the valuable Isle of St. Kilda; and also have protected 3,000 souls from the infamous oppression under which most of them are now groaning.

Mackenzie of Seaforth is the sole proprietor of all Lewis, a tract of country of, or about seventy miles in length, and twenty miles in breadth, with many fertile islands
c adjacent.

adjacent. All Lewis is inhabited, for the most part by tenants, who rent their farms immediately from himself. Mr. Mackenzie easily perceived the folly, as well as the inhumanity, of lending out the people on his island to imperious tacksmen, for the purpose of raising fortunes to themselves on the ruins of the unfortunate subtenants. The greatest tacksmen in Lewis is the laird's ground officer; a place of great power and trust as well as emolument, in districts where the will of the landholder, or that of his agent, is of greater efficacy than written laws or records. The station he holds is a pledge for his good behaviour, in the character of tacksmen; for should he commit any considerable act of violence or injustice to his inferior cottagers, he would soon be removed from his master's good graces, and from his office.

The British laws have been introduced by Mr. Mackenzie into Lewis. In the town of Stornoway there are magistrates, who regularly sit in judgment to hear and decide the different controversies that are brought before them, by passing sentence impartially every week: besides this, the Sheriff-De-
pute,

pute holds courts in that town, as do also the Justice of the Peace and Baron Bailie.

Mr. Mackenzie has a noble presence, and handsome open countenance. He may well seem to be the head of a great clan. He has excellent parts and universal knowledge, but is particularly distinguished by his enthusiasm and attainments in natural history. Though he is deaf from an early misfortune, he is very lively and pleasing in conversation. The company spell the words on their fingers, and Mackenzie answers by speech. Being extremely quick of apprehension, he will carry on a regular discourse on any subject with his guests. After seeing a few letters spelt on the fingers, he immediately supplies the rest, and saves them the trouble of going through the whole.

Those who have the honour of visiting at his house, are at pains to touch their fingers cleverly; and most of the gentlemen at Stornaway are adepts at this kind of learning, in order to make themselves understood and agreeable, while in company: and I have been much delighted to see and hear them

converse, the one by the fingers and signs, and the other by speech.

Mackenzie has brought to Harris, partridges, and other animals, formerly unknown in Lewis, from the main land, to raise a breed there for game: he is an excellent shot himself, and delights much in fowling and hunting, and other manly sports and diversions.

The present Mackenzie, head and representative of the Mackenzies of Seaforth, succeeded to his brother, Colonel Mackenzie Humberstone, who lost his life in the war in India, that terminated in 1783. General Macleod, Colonel Humberstone, and some other officers, had left the army at Bednore, and came straight to Bombay, in order to lay before the Council the mad conduct and unheard-of rapacity and injustice of General Matthews. On their return in the Ranger Snow to join the army, of which General Macleod was now appointed Commander in Chief, on the 8th of April, 1783, off Geriah, they fell in with the Maratta fleet of five sail of square-rigged vessels.—
Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding this excessive disparity of force, the Captain of the *Ranger* refused to strike to the enemy. An obstinate battle ensued: nor did it cease till almost every man in the English ship was killed or wounded. Among the former was Major Shaw of the hundredth regiment; and among the latter, Brigadier General Macleod, Colonel Mackenzie Humberstone, and Lieutenant John Taylor; who, together with the Captain of the ship, Pruin, and other prisoners, were carried into Geriah, a port of the Marattas, where they remained for several weeks. Colonel Humberstone died of his wounds, in the twenty-eighth year of his age. General Macleod recovered, being wounded but slightly: so also did Captain Taylor, though severely wounded, and that two gun balls went through and through different parts of his body: he even recovered soon, enjoying a sound and excellent constitution, and in the character of a brave officer, as well as commissary to the army, at a time when the company's finances and credit were at the lowest ebb, by his personal credit, activity, and address, rendered the most essential service to the company and to

his country. The writer of THE MEMOIRS OF THE LATE WAR IN ASIA, from which I have taken these anecdotes, makes the following brief eulogium on Colonel Mackenzie Humberstone. "An early and habitual conversancy with the heroes of ancient as well as modern times, nourished in his mind a passion for military glory, and supported him, under remitting application; to all those studies by which he might improve his mind, rise to honourable distinction, and render his name immortal. He was not only acute, but profound and steady in his views, gallant without ostentation and spirited without temerity and imprudence." Two great chiefs from the Hyperborean Islands of the Hebrides, making war on the shores of India, present a picture of the present extended intercourse among nations, and of the natural sway that hardy have over effeminate climates.

These then are the principal landholders in the Western Hebrides.

The TACKSMEN who rent from the great proprietors of land large districts, are able
in

in general to rank with gentlemen of from 2 or 300l. to 1,000l. and upwards a year. They are, for the most part, relations of the families of whom they hold their leases; and many of them half-pay officers of the army. Ministers too of parishes have, for the most part, advantageous leases, of which they make much greater account than of their stipends. There are some of the tacksmen who unite the business of grazing and agriculture with that of trade, and oftener of smuggling. There is not perhaps any part of the world where the good things of this life are more unequally distributed. While the scallag and subtenant are wholly at the mercy of the tacksmen, the tacksmen, from a large and advantageous farm, the cheapness of every necessary, and by means of smuggling of every luxury, rolls in ease and affluence.

In South Uist the chief tacksmen are, Captain Macdonald, tacksmen of Phrobost, son and successor to the laird of Boisdale, whose good qualities he inherits, and particularly a tender concern for the comfort

of his subtenants and scallags ; the minister of Howmore, who has accumulated several farms on the expulsion and ruin of the former possessor ; the tacksmen of Milton, Geary, Vailteas, Staal Gheary, and Borenish-wachir ; and Mr. Patrick Nicholson, an industrious farmer and enterprising merchant. Mr. Nicholson, in his commerce with mankind, is as just and upright as any man in his line of life, and in a quarter so distant from the seats of law and government, can well be supposed to be. He is a great encourager of the industrious poor ; and, though not a native of the place, is highly and justly esteemed by all ranks of people.

In North Uist, Mr. Macdonald Balrarnald, a very sensible and agreeable man, has greatly improved his farm, by draining lochs, and converting the ground into rich arable fields. It is to be hoped that his landlord, who, through his well-directed industry, will acquire a considerable accession to his landed property will reward him, at the expiration of his present lease, according to his merit.

Another

Another valuable farm in North Uist is possessed by the reverend gentleman, of Ty-Gearry; who of all the tacksmen, clergymen, and gentlemen of the Western Isles of Scotland, is the largest and jolliest, as well as one of the most hospitable and the best natured. Never was the minister and tacksmen of Ty-Gheary known to kick, beat, or scourge, or, in any shape, to lift his hand against his scallags in the whole course of his life. Were he not so well tempered a man, this moderation, not a little unusual in the Western Hebrides, might be ascribed to motives of self-interest; for a few blows, even with his naked fist, would break their bones to pieces, and render them for ever useless to himself or to others.

Mr. Macdonald, Balishear, is factor and baron bailie on Lord Macdonald's estate in this island; an office which places him above the necessity, as a social and convivial turn renders him superior to an inclination towards those sordid arts too often practised by tacksmen. Lord Macdonald, in what is called the last set, that is, the last renewal of his leases in North Uist, has laid a pretty heavy

heavy hand on Mr. Maclean, tackfman of Heifgear; Mr. Macdonald, tackfman of Trumpis Geary; and Mr. Maclean of Solas. But as all of these gentlemen have thought proper to become old batchelors, it is charitably to be presumed, that his Lordship meant this as a gentle rebuke for their neglect of matrimony.

Another tackfman in North Uist, not to be passed over in silence, is Captain Macdonald of Valay; a gentleman strictly honorable, without hauteur and pride, complaisant without deceit; humble, yet commanding respect; hospitable, without vanity or ostentation; chearful, yet equally free from all indecency and affectation; charitable to the poor, beloved and esteemed by all.

Mr. Maclean of Bournay is rather a laird than a tackfman, as he derives immense wealth from the quantities of kelp manufactured on his island; and as his lease continues for generations to come.

The island of HARRIS, thirty-six miles in length, and from five to fourteen in breadth,

breadth, with a number of inferior and adjacent isles, the whole upwards of twelve miles in circumference, is divided among five great tacksmen.

Harris, with its dependent isles, contains about three thousand souls, most of them in a state of actual bondage. Mr. Norman Macleod, tacksman of Bernera, when we consider the vast number of his subtenants, servants, and scallags; the farms, with cow-houses, &c. in his own hand, and the kelp made on his numerous rocks and isles, may be reckoned the first tacksman in the isles, or in North Britain. This gentleman and his lady are both advanced in years. They have three daughters, all of whom will, at the death of their father, be well provided for. Mr. Macleod has introduced into his district many new improvements; as English sheep, and large horses and bulls to mend the breed of cattle; as also jack-asses to breed mules, a hardy kind of animal, and well fitted for labour in a hilly and rugged country. He sows peas, turnips, and lint-feed, to advantage. He has introduced the use of carts and sledges into his husbandry, instead

instead of carriage on the backs of horses and scallags; and mills wrought by horses, instead of the hand-mill or quern. He sets many good examples to his neighbours and tenants, and is, on the whole, a useful and respectable member of society. But he gives himself no trouble about the execution of justice: he leaves the other tacksmen to treat their subtenants and cottagers with all the freedom and caprice of a Scottish baron before the jurisdiction act.

The tacksmen of Ensay is factor for all the estate of Harris. He is also baron bailie, though he has not held a court for these seven years. He deals deeply in the kelp trade, and also in illicit trade.

The tacksmen of Strond is distinguished by humanity to his subtenants and scallags, who are objects of envy to all the other subtenants and scallags in Harris.

The man who now enjoys the lease of St. Kilda, being lame and decrepit, was for sometime a charity schoolmaster in that place ---Of whom afterwards, when treating of St. Kilda.

The

The population of Harris is estimated at three thousand souls; most of whom, except the few who rent their farms immediately from the laird, are as obedient to the nod of the five great tacksmen, or captains, as ever their forefathers were to their warlike chiefs, when the *crosh tarridh*, or war signal, was lighted.

The gentlemen in the Western Islands have, many of them, the advantage of an university education. They are commonly connected together by the ties of matrimony, or consanguinity, or otherwise, which makes them firm to one another; while the commoners are no less united among themselves, by similar bonds of friendship, in their respective departments.

The oldest son generally succeeds to the tack, a much better birth than any of the other sons find, unless some extraordinary good fortune falls in the way of such as go in quest of bread to other countries.

The young ladies are generally worse off, being obliged to form such connections as
remain

remain in the country, or continue single, in case the gentleman is not agreeable to her, after making his addressees; for their own equals in point of rank are commonly sent abroad, either in the army or navy, or some other line of bread.

CHAP. III.

*Tacksmen — Subtenants — Scallags — Predial
Slaves.*

THE same ingenious and patriotic traveller, whom I have already mentioned,* in his Tour in England and Scotland, replete with useful instruction as well as elegant entertainment, in a comparative view, which he takes of the former and the present state of the Highlands of Scotland, makes the following just and interesting observations.

“ The actual system of landed property in the west of Europe has varied its form with the prevailing character of successive ages. It has been accommodated to the rude simplicity of the more antient times, as well as to the feudal chivalry of the middle ages. In the present times, it is every
where

Captain Newte.

where subjected to a new modification, from the genius and maxims of a commercial age, and from increasing industry and cultivation. But, from this modification, flagrant oppressions have arisen ; the lordly chief applying the maxims of an age in which money is the universal representative, and letters the universal media of transferring property, to establishments founded in times when the great proprietors of land, wholly employed in hunting, military exploits, and rude conviviality, never dreamed of increasing their fortunes by means of commerce : which, if they had known, they would have disdained. The glory of the chief was the glory of all his kindred and name : and the numbers and fidelity of his vassals and tenants, again, were what constituted the power and consequence of the chief. The produce of land, corn, cattle, fish, and game, were spent on the estate, but chiefly at the mansion-houses of the great, in generous hospitality. And in those times, the Highlanders were better fed, and, in general, finer men than they are at present. For now the cattle, the salmon, and the very game, are either carried or driven out of the country :
nor

nor has the faint dawn of commerce been yet able to supply that abundance which preceded it."

This English gentleman could not have given a more faithful account of these things, if he had lived in the Highland countries for a long series of years. When the great landholders lived among the husbandmen, who were for the most part allied to them by blood, or at least the sameness of name, the people loved their chiefs: and each laird and lord was accounted rich or poor according to the number of tenants that possessed their lands. But now, in the absence of the great proprietors, the power and influence of the laird is transferred to a few tacksmen; who, in some instances, of late, squeeze them without mercy. The tacksmen and subtenants, formerly, or nearly, on an equal footing, were wont to plead their cause, on equal terms, before a common chief. At present they are obliged to be much more submissive to their tacksmen than ever they were, in former times, to their lairds or lords. Formerly, they were a free, animated, and bold people, commanding respect from their undaunted,

courage, and repelling injuries from whatever quarter they came, both by words and actions. But, now they must approach even the tacksmen with cringing humility, heartless, and discouraged, with tattered rags, hungry bellies, and down-cast looks, carrying their own implements of husbandry for ten or twelve miles back and forward, over hills and mountains, to do the work of their tacksmen : and must either sit wet in their cloaths all night in a dirty kitchen, or sleep in dirty cloaths, particularly at Luskintire in Harris, exposed to be trampled on by swine, where the kitchen is commonly the sty. But I must here observe, that there is a great difference between that mild treatment which is shewn to subtenants and even scallags, by the old lessees, descended of ancient and honourable families, and the outrageous rapacity of those necessitous strangers, who have obtained leases from absent proprietors, who treat the natives as if they were a conquered, and inferior race of mortals. Formerly, a Highlander would have drawn his dirk against even a laird, if he had subjected him to the indignity of a blow : at present, any tyrannical tacksmen, in the absence of the laird or lord,

lord, whose presence alone can enforce good order and justice, may strike a scallag, and even a subtenant, with perfect impunity. What a degree of spirit and virtue is to be expected from a people so humbled, so enslaved? What degree of courage, or even inclination to repel an invading enemy? "If we have not much money," some of these tacksmen have been known to say, "we have men enough: let us wear them well while they are in our power." In short, they treat them like beasts of burthen; and in all respects like slaves attached to the soil, as they cannot obtain new habitations, on account of the combinations already mentioned, and are entirely at the mercy of the laird or tacksman. I agree entirely with those gentlemen who contend for the breaking of entails, and limiting and restraining excessive farms, on the ground of a wise and humane œconomy? May we not go a step farther, and enquire, if the expulsion of tenantry whose fathers have held their farms, perhaps for ages, be strictly legal, even according to our present laws? If this be agreeable to law, it is not certainly consonant with the genius of the British constitution;

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tution; nor indeed of any political constitution: for, if it were, it would be in the power of a great chief, or a confederacy of chiefs, to depopulate whole islands, and other territories, and thereby weaken and even annihilate the strength and security of the nation. A rise in rent, proportionate to the rising price of labour and provisions, that is, the gradual depreciation of the value of money, would be right; as is the case, in the perpetual leases granted, of late, by the crown, and certain territorial lords in Denmark. But no violent and sudden extermination! The load of suffering has been gradually pressed heavier and heavier down upon the immediate cultivators of land in the islands, and more remote parts of the Highlands, from feudal times, when the heart and the sword of a tenant was deemed the noblest and the surest treasure, to the present.

Formerly, the personal service of the tenant did not, usually, exceed eight or ten days in the year. There lives, at present, at Scalpa, in the Isle of Harris, a tacksmen of a large district, who instead of six days work

work paid by the subtenants to his predecessor in the lease, has raised the predial service, called in that and in other parts of Scotland, *manerial bondage*, to fifty-two days in the year at once ; besides many other services to be performed at different though regular and stated times : as tanning leather for brogues ; making heather ropes for thatch ; digging and drying peats for fuel ; one pannier of peat charcoal to be carried to the smith ; so many days for gathering and shearing sheep and lambs ; for ferrying cattle from island to island, and other distant places ; and several days for going on distant errands ; so many pounds of wool to be spun into yarn. And over and above all this, they must lend their aid, upon any unforeseen occurrence, whenever they are called on. The constant service of two months at once is performed, at the proper season, in the making of kelp. On the whole, this gentleman's subtenants may be computed to devote to his service full three days in the week. But this is not all : they have to pay, besides, yearly, a certain number of cocks, hens, butter, and cheese, called CAORIGH-FERRIN, the WIFE'S PORTION ! This, it must be owned, is one of

the most severe and rigorous tacksmen descended from the old inhabitants, in all the Western Hebrides : but the situation of his subtenants exhibits but too faithful a picture of the subtenants of those places in general ; and the exact counterpart of such enormous oppression is to be found at Luskintire.

This man was bred, like many of his countrymen, for the sea-service, and underwent many vicissitudes of fortune both by sea and land. He was shipwrecked, taken prisoner by the French, escaped almost naked, struggled with many difficulties for years in America, and afterwards came home to the isles, and dealt in spirits, sugar, tea, coffee, and the kelp trade ; by all which means he amassed a considerable fortune. Thus rich, and independent, this man, it is said, took his father's lease over his head. The old man and his wife, stung with vexation and grief, rather than live in some adjoining hut at the mercy of such a son, went with the rest of their family to America, where the aged parents of this unnatural child died soon after in wretched poverty.

He afterwards turned out of his large and fine farm, the whole of his relations, who held little possessions on-it, and who fell soon into great want.

There is a species of tenantry still in the Western Hebrides, as heretofore throughout Scotland, who hold their possessions by a kind of tenure called *Steel-Bow*; or, the appraisement of the whole stock of cattle, houses, and implements of husbandry, and every thing else belonging to the farm, on condition of the tenants' paying a certain yearly rent, and, at the expiration of the lease, leaving the premises exactly as he found them. This is the case of Luskintire at present.

The poor Hebrideans are on foot every morning at five o'clock at latest; the women at their querns or hand-mills: the men at some other piece of employment until day-light invites them into the field, or to the sea shores, where they must begin a set task of cutting sea-weed with the ebbing of the tide. They are obliged to work as for life or death, that they may be able to get their quantity of sea-weed carried clear off.

If when they are on work for their MASTER, whether laird or tackfman, they should be an hour behind the time fixed for their making their appearance, they are instantly trounced home, with orders to be there more early the next morning. No apology will be admitted: neither the inclemency of the weather, nor the height nor ruggedness of the hills they had to cross, nor an accident by the road, nor the loss of that day, to those who have so few they can call their own, very precious. All goes for nothing. The interest, the will of the master must be attended to, not theirs. To all this severity the unfeeling tackfman often adds cruel mockings and imprecations.

This treatment, bad as it is, might be borne by a people whose spirits are subdued by unremitting, unalleviated insolence and oppression. But the master, or his overseer, called a *grieve*, often, on the most frivolous pretences, abandons himself to bursts of passion, and with hands, feet, and rods, breaks the bones of men and women too. This is not an exaggerated picture. The broken ribs of one young maid, named Maclellan, from the
village

village of Cluor, attest the fact; which was committed by a tacksmen assuming the title of DOCTOR. The same DOCTOR (reversed) almost took the life of another innocent maid, from Shileboft; though she gave no other offence than that of tarrying a little longer than he wished, at her mistress's desire, to finish something she had in hands. This girl was so bruised, that the Doctor was obliged to lock her up from her parents for some days, lest, by seeing her danger, their feelings might be raised above the dread of the tyrant, and they should fly for vengeance with the cry of murder in their mouths, to the Doctor's landlord, Captain Macleod, who, it was said, had the young woman died, would not have interfered to save his tenant, but have suffered the law to take its course. Though she will never again be perfectly well or able to bear fatigue, she so far recovered her strength as to bear the stress of being carried to her father's house.

"The Celts," says Mr. Pinkerton, in his History of the Picts, "had, and still have, a natural contempt for the fair sex; for, being mere savages, but one degree above
brutes,

brutes, they remain still in much the same state of society as in the days of Julius. The Samoeids are remarkable for the same contempt of their women, whom they regard as impure; and treat their wives with the utmost tyranny and brutality. Whoever travels among them will see these savages stretched at their ease, and their wives and women toiling like the brute beasts for their unmanly husbands."

One would imagine, that this historian saw the beastly brutality of this action; and the perpetrator lolling in bed, on a cold frosty morning, and pampering his belly with fat cream and butter-milk, until he thought proper to rise by eleven o'clock, to call in his starving wife from winnowing corn, or graddan from the quern, either in a cold barn, or open field, where she stands from day-light, as overseer of the working people, to eat porridge and milk, as tea is too great a luxury for common fare. But the public may believe me, in telling, that few gentlemen over all the isle love their wives like this man, but quite the reverse. I appeal to every traveller of honour and candour,

candour, who not only has experienced their uncommon hospitality, but has seen the warmth of their affections to their wives. There are no people without some exceptionable characters---Why blame the whole Celts more than others for having a few of that order of mortals among them?

In the Western Hebrides, remote from the springs of government, and almost wholly under the authority of caprice, men of low birth and education, creeping into leases, being of gross, untutored natures, and pampered too with rich and stimulating aliments, indulge themselves in excesses of passion and brutality that, in more refined and better regulated countries, would not, on any account, be tolerated. The tyrant, of whom I have just been speaking, unless he be answered immediately at a call, sets up a horrid growl, which is instantly heard over the whole house, accompanied by threats, very soon and summarily executed. If nobody comes in his way on whom he may wreak his vengeance, he falls with great fury on the furniture of the house, which he hurls against the walls, and breaks into pieces.

He

He is particularly studious, and with great deliberation, sets about the demolition of whatever article he supposes a particular value is set on by his wife.

I was witness of an action that struck me very forcibly at the time when it happened, and which I cannot now recollect without a degree of horror. A man calling himself a gentleman, had a mind to horsewhip one of his scallags, who had given him some offence. But, missing the immediate object of his resentment, he fell in with his sister, a pretty and innocent young damsel, who happened to be carrying a barley cake for her brother's breakfast. The gentleman buffeted the girl severely, tossed the cake out of her hands, and kicked her before him, as she attempted to recover the cake, with his foot.

The gentleman whose character I mean to illustrate by the above anecdote, has revived an old country statute, entitling the tacksman to any sheep or lamb that should be found unmarked among his flock, at the time of shearing. This regulation, or decree,

cree, or whatever it may be called, was made for the purpose of preventing thieves from stealing sheep, under pretence of seeking their own among the tacksmen's sheep; but it was either never rigorously enforced, or it had fallen into disuetude, and was only held over their heads, *in terrorem*, until this harpy took into his head to carry it into execution. I was told a laughable squabble that happened between this man and one of his poor subtenant's wives that lived at a paltry place near Diraclet, called Ceandibeg. This woman had a strong sheep that she could not catch, for want of a dog bred for that purpose, as is the custom in the island, so that the lamb was not marked when the tacksman collected his sheep. The tacksman seeing a large and fat lamb following the poor man's ewe, ordered one of his scallags to carry it home for his dinner. But the poor man's wife to whom the lamb belonged, happening to be present, remonstrated stoutly against such an act of injustice, urging, that the dam that the lamb followed, and by which it was suckled, sufficiently proved it to be her property. But the tacksman, deaf to all her arguments, re-

newed

newed his orders to his scallags to carry off the lamb. But the fellows knowing the virago they had to deal with, were rather backward to carry their master's orders into execution. Xantippe held better than the tacksmen could draw, crying out in the Gâlic language, "Sfear cumal cailliach no taruing bodaich:" that is, "An old woman holds better than an old man can pull." She held the lamb as firmly as a cat holds a mouse: and, after a long struggle, the tacksmen of Luskintire was obliged to give up his expected prey, and yield to substantial justice.

It has been alledged, but without any proofs, that he calculates, to a few months, the time when he can become master of the effects of the poor subtenants on his lease, and is always on the look out for a rich one to supply the vacancy, that he may add the man who failed to the number of his scallags. And one Malcolm Macdonald, though turned out of his farm by his master, for political reasons not to be mentioned, preferred keeping by the forest with his cattle for two seasons, however hard, in expectation

tion of meeting with a vacancy in the lands of some other more humane tackfman, to the acceptance of any farm belonging to this oppressor, though repeatedly solicited by him to do so, knowing too well that his effects, more than any personal regard for his interest, were the motives by which this man was influenced. But few or none will come to his lands but such as are turned out by other milder tacksmen for some fault, and have no other place to put their heads in. Of this number he has already, on his ground, upwards of seven families: and among others, a certain well-known man with a number of different wives, and their brood; which is still increasing; and likely to add, more and more, to the population of the country.—He is not only a great oppressor of his poor subtenants and scallags, but offensive to his equals, by the supercilious insolence and scoffingness of his manners; infomuch that the tackfman of Strond, though the simplest man in all the country, was provoked to belabour him with a cudgel. Nay, he was even thrashed heartily by a stout fellow, one of his own scallags. He is also a great profaner of the sabbath, forcing his poor subtenants to carry

carry burthens on that day, for want of time to repair to their families on the Saturdays, and a reviler and mocker of sacred characters. The sneering severity of his scoffings against the present minister of St. Kilda made that reverend man say, that he was an enemy to mankind; if not in power to resent it. But it were well if his injurious treatment of the clergy were confined to banter and derision: instances are not wanting of his marking them out as objects of more serious aggression. A certain clergyman who had not any house of his own, and who was under the necessity of wandering from place to place for quarters in this shamefully neglected country, yielded, contrary to the advice of his friends, to the pressing invitations of the steel-bowman of Luskintire, to become a preceptor to his children, a lodger and inmate of his house. But his treatment of the clergyman was so contrary to the laws of friendship and honour, that it is soon to be made a subject of prosecution in a court of justice. But, in vindication of that noble spirit of hospitality, good faith, and generosity toward strangers, which formerly distinguished, and still in some measure distinguishes

guishes the Islands and Highlands of Scotland in general.

I shall relate a fact which happened under the roof of a gentleman of genuine honour, of the name of Campbell, and in this very neighbourhood, to the unfortunate CHARLES STUART, while concealed in the Hebrides, when both the hospitality and secrecy of the honest islanders to that unhappy Prince reflected much honour upon their tender generosity.

As the fact is hitherto unknown to the world, and points out the integrity of the gentleman who afforded the misguided Chevalier the full extent of the laws of hospitality in his distress, I flatter myself the whole of this transaction will not, at this distance of time, be offensive to any person of generosity. It is a fact attested by many living witnesses, that the Prince, with a select band of active gentlemen doubly armed, landed at the Island of Glas, in the Long Isle, before day, on the third morning after the battle of Culloden was fought and gained.

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ed by the Duke of CUMBERLAND. That Prince and his men were concealed for weeks, by Mr. Campbell, until a safe passage could be found to carry him to the northern coast, where he might pass through Germany for France. A passage was actually bespoken for that purpose, though for political reasons the promised vessel was afterwards refused. Mean time let me remark, how honourably Mr. Campbell behaved to CHARLES and the gentlemen who lodged under his roof. No money, no bribe could make him violate the sacred laws of hospitality, and fix an eternal stain on his family. Even though it was well known that this gentleman was strictly loyal and well attached to the reigning Family, yet the enormous sum of thirty thousand pounds could not bribe him to act the infamous part required. The master of a noted family, a very bulky man, who is now alive, and resides in an island in that country, with the clergyman at their head, landed before day, with a boat full of armed men, on the Isle of Glafs, with a determined resolution to seize the Chevalier, and secure the bribe offered by Government.

Mr.

Mr. Campbell scorned the bribe; and expostulated much against the infamous attempt; he also pointed out the danger of making the experiment on so many formidable and desperate gentlemen who would chop the heads off the whole of them before they sheathed their swords. But when he found that they still persisted in spite of reason, he assured them, that he himself would fall in his cause, rather than give up the man that intrusted him with his life, or entail shame on his posterity. With that view he dispatched his son to give them intelligence of their danger. The Chevalier and his party were forewarned, and armed before that gentleman arrived, and were ready to give the assailants a hot reception, had they approached; but they sneaked off from the island, ashamed, and disappointed at the loss of the money, which they already had devoured in their thoughts, and divided to every man in his due proportion.

But, to return from this noble-minded gentleman to our little tyranical country Surgeon.

Soon after he had acquired possession of the vast tract of country already mentioned, he began, with undaunted courage, to double the rents of the subtenants, either by adding more money to their former rents, or by adding two or more tenants to one bay or town, by taking islands from another, by extorting some tuns of sea-ware for kelp from a third, though their land should want manure and themselves bread; nay, and to erect new bays in places formerly altogether uninhabited. Instead of six days he added fifty-two days yearly, to be paid, along with all the services and casualties laid on, as already mentioned, by the preceding tacksmen. Being determined that he should not fail through delicacy like his predecessors, while the people were masters, of a shilling he will have it, or they must remove; and as they had no other place to go to, he was sure that he would make them yield to his terms.

At so unusual and terrible an attack on the poor people, they cried out most loudly, and were much surprised that the land steward
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ard did not interfere with his authority : but as he was the man that gave them over to be hired out for this man's advantage, it was in vain to apply to him ; yet their case was truly distressing, for the sea-ware which they had for the cold moss, being the only stimulus to make it bear, was not only taken from them, but also the time for making the ground ready for it, was taken likewise.

It may not be improper to mention here, as a circumstance descriptive of the Western Hebrides, that before he dared to practise those oppressions, he thought it adviseable to fortify himself by a strong matrimonial alliance: This he did by marrying an old maiden lady ; who, in her younger days, would have treated the idea of being united to such a man, with the utmost scorn. Although old residents claim a kind of prescriptive right of oppression, they do not allow the same right to new in-comers, whom they consider as interlopers, unless they initiate and ingraft themselves, as it were, among the old tacksmen, if not among the lairds, by marriage.

Before I quit this extraordinary character, I must yet relate the following anecdote.

He was patronized, when a very young practitioner in physic and surgery, by old Clanronald, whom he fleeced of a large sum of money, in the following manner. He was engaged by that good-natured chief, or rather contrived to be engaged by him, to administer medicines occasionally among his poor tenantry in South Uist. This easy gentleman, to encourage so laborious a physician, bound and obliged himself by a bond, already prepared by the skilful practitioner, to be forthcoming for any deficiency in point of payment on the part of his tenants.--- With this security in his pocket, subscribed by Clanronald, he was encouraged to exercise his unlimited commission with indefatigable industry, over this extensive district; and marked with great care his charge against them, accurately dated, for his faithful attendance.

The old gentleman being in his dotage, and perhaps in his cups, when he subscribed the bond, forgot to mention the deed to his

his active lady, who was ignorant of the matter until some time thereafter. When her husband was dead and buried, the account was presented to her for payment, and a demand made.

The lady, astonished and enraged at so glaring an advantage taken of her unsuspicious husband, denied the justice of the charge, and desired the infamous bond to be thrown into the fire.

But here, for the first time, her ladyship found her mistake in this man; for in him she found no longer the fawning, flattering cringer, who carefully attended on her husband's bowl, but the forward, daring, impudent fellow, as her ladyship said in her passion.

He assured her ladyship, that the money he was determined to have; and accordingly sued for it at law. She defended her cause before the court at Edinburgh, and represented the dangerous man in a proper point of view; and his artfully practising on her husband's

weak side, to pick his pockets. The force of these arguments the whole Court saw ; but as he was in possession of the bond, though infamously obtained, the law was so clear on his side, that sentence was given in his favour, and thus he triumphed over the defrauded lady.

After this contest with the lady of the manor, he had penetration enough to understand that her country was likely to be too hot for him to reside in ; and as the gentlemen and people had taken the alarm against the man whose intrigues they formerly only suspected, he judged it adviseable to pack up his chests of medicine, seeing all his hopes of drawing more into a similar snare were quite blasted.

He now began to look about where he should next lay down his boxes. In Lewis they were too well acquainted with him ; for the low countries he had not sufficient knowledge ; and his own country he abhors, because he wisely recollected, that a prophet had no honour there. In these circumstances,

ces, he turned his face to the wild hills of Harris, and took a ten year's lease of Luskintire.

And now, to give to all these particulars concerning this oppressive and fraudulent man, some connection with a general description of the state of society. Through his great influence and power he has obtained a kind of clerical dignity; having been created a SENATOR, or ELDER of the Church: of which order of men in general, but particularly the Elders of Harris, as well as the state of religion in the Western Hebrides, I shall have occasion to speak afterwards: from a review of all which it will manifestly appear, that religious, not less than civil matters, in the Western Hebrides, are much influenced by their remote distance from the seat of Government.

The tacksmen next to be mentioned is the Rev. Mr. Macleod, minister of Harris: a man, who, from the lowest origin, has, by talents, insinuation, and address, attained to great wealth, influence, and authority.

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This gentleman has a kind of legislative authority for making country regulations. His ordinances, the tenants maintain, are framed to support the rich and distress the poor. As these, however, have no vote in the courts of justice, their business is to bear the yoke and keep silent.

As the baron bailie seldom holds any courts, every tackfman is invested with the full powers of the barons, only they dare not intermeddle with the four pleas of the crown. I could never learn that they ventured to hang any man at these private courts; but for other petty crimes they horse-whip them, and even scourge them tied up naked to a post. It will easily be credited, that scourging their servants is common, when we find it practised even by their ministers of religion: of an instance of which I myself was witness.

A stout fellow, named M'Corcle, son to the hen-wife (caillach nan ceark) that lived near, was detected one evening in taking a mouthful of barley meal out of an old chest, through a hole made by the
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the mice ; very destructive creatures, and particularly to this youth, being the means of leading him into a trap that made him groan. The fellow having nothing to plead but hunger, was found guilty, and sentence was pronounced for whipping on a stated day, with his hands tied, and his body bound to a stake.

All the tenants were summoned to attend at the execution of this sentence, and ordered each to bring his family, that they might learn therefrom what each of themselves had to expect in case any of them were ever detected at such criminal practices in time coming.

But as there is no hangman in all this extensive estate, no one of the tenants would become driver ; therefore the reverend personage took on himself an office so consistent with the religion which he professed to teach ! And accordingly, he and his lady led forth the criminal, stripped him of his rags, bound him to the stake, and began a very heavy exercise upon the bare buff of the delinquent, when he received many a lusty stripe. But the cries of caillach nan ceark,

ceark, his mother, the clappings of hands, tearing of her hair, beating of her breast, and running herself out of breath, till at length she fainted away, made every soul present sad and sorrowful.

The Sabbath following, he was led to the church, with a bag of meal about his neck, a humiliating spectacle to the parishioners, who were given to know thereby what each of themselves, should he transgress, had to expect from the hands of the reverend executioner. At this new spectacle the people are said to have emitted a confused noise, and turned away their eyes with (a bhuain, a bhuain! Cha bè shud ar ministar beannuight Aulay, ach n'fior bhruit fon cleochd) "Away with it! This, said they, was not the lesson taught by their blessed minister, old Aulay, but that of a beast under the appearance of a parson to insult them."

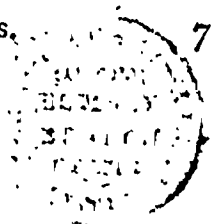
This oppressor exacts the same rigorous terms of work and days, with all other casualties, from his subterrants and scallags, that the two last-mentioned ones demand. And the people are no less loud in their complaints

plaints against the poverty of their diets. Many of them prefer their own, though at his work; no small mortification to a spirit so inflated with pride and haughtiness. But being in the heart of his wife's connections, many of his overbearing oppressions must be borne with, for fear of offending them; for no clergyman could be safe if he attempted any thing that would border on oppression, being either unconnected by matrimony, or affinity, with such as did belong to the country; and of course, less intitled to the favour of the gentlemen of the place.

And most of the cautious, artful gentlemen, whose fine leases are almost expired, cast their caps at his feet, lest his busy intermeddling disposition should lead him to open the eyes of the managers to set them on searching out the real profits that are paid by the lower subtenants, and ruin that branch of their profitable gain, as well as the great benefits that some of them reap from the submissive conduct of their tenantry, who are afraid of offending their old masters, lest they should fall under the mercy of the
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late incumbents, whose conduct is terror compleat.—

Strange as it may appear, it is a fact, that if an innocent gentleman should unfortunately fall under the lash of these tyrants, instead of a reparation for the abuse, which they are conscious of having committed, their rage increaseth, wantonly, and without cause : so far are they from making an apology, or giving redress, that the injured man incurs their hatred more and more, and their rage is converted gradually into down-right malice. So true is the observation of Tacitus, *proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem læseris*. “ It is natural to the human heart to hate the man whom you have injured.”



CHAP. IV.

*Of the Genius, Customs, Manners, and Dress
of the Western Hebrideans.*

HAVING said so much concerning proprietors, tacksmen, subtenants, and scallags, we shall now turn our attention to their genius, customs, manners, dress, and modes of life.

The Western Hebrideans are, in general, naturally possessed of strong parts, quick and penetrating in their apprehensions, perhaps in a much higher degree than is to be met with in the heart of any inland country. This must arise from their frequent intercourse with different characters of men, to which their connection with navigation daily exposes them, and forces them to be cautious, active, and insinuating. Besides this, their constant danger from that element,

element, with which they are so conversant, renders it absolutely necessary to have their eyes and wit perpetually exercised for their preservation; and that custom becomes a confirmed habit that displays itself in all their ordinary commerce through life.

They have a fine vein for poetry and music, both vocal and instrumental: more especially in both the Uists; where one may meet, not only with studied, but even extemporaneous effusions of the most acute and pointed satire, that pierce to the heart, and leave a poignant sting.

At the same time, in these compositions one meets with the most soft and tender strains of feeling affection, that melt the soul with heart-felt sensibility and love, along with the most moving dirges and lamentations for their lost sweet-hearts and friends; and the whole composed by the vulgar, no less than by the most refined. In these qualities they excel any of the English or old Scots songs, which have hitherto been published, however much and deservedly celebrated and admired by every
true

true judge of musical compositions. And had the language been so generally understood, the Gâlic music would have been introduced, with admiration and delight, on every stage on which taste and elegance prevailed.

Their *luinneags*, with the chorus of the band, are inconceivably agreeable to the ear; and the manner of turning the hands and handkerchiefs, when united in the circle, is no less entertaining to the eye. Vocal and instrumental music make up part of their entertainments. In their agility in the dance, they stand almost unrivalled by any people. In Lewis, since their late happy change from servitude to freedom by the present noble-minded proprietor, they are animated with such life as to meet in companies, regularly every week, at stated places, where both old and young take their turn at this agreeable pastime; when they exercise themselves with amazing alertness and spirit. Their musicians receive regular salaries. The violin is more used on these occasions than the small pipes. This last, with the great pipe, is mostly used in the field, at weddings, funerals, and other public meetings. The piper must
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play up a *Cuart Phibrachd*, a march that is heard at a great distance, and produces a fine effect on the spirits of the company. Most of the great families had their pipers to play before the doors, or in the great hall, during meal-time, and appointed certain lands for their support, which continued in the families time immemorial. Some still retain this ancient custom. The M'Cruimans of Sky hold their lands from Macleod of Macleod, still as their family seat, for attending the chief's person and family.

There is no distinct account, at what time this farm was granted to them. These famous people had a kind of college for teaching young men that branch of music, and qualifying them to make a superior appearance in public, to such as have only common advantages.

The principal piper of another great chief from the Isles is now professor of that branch of music, in Edinburgh, and is attended by several scholars; and some of them frequently gain the premiums given by the HIGHLAND SOCIETY, of London, to be annually competed

peted for in that metropolis. Of the merit of the candidates the professor, and other competent gentlemen, are the judges.

The common people are wonderfully ingenious ; even the women as well as the men are weavers. They learn that trade in a few months. But they are often interrupted by the tacksmen, who pretend that they are spoiling the cloth ; but in reality want to oblige these manufacturers to betake themselves to their service, for they do not care though they should wear skins instead of cloth, provided they can promote their own ends by securing the labours of these weavers. These objections are the more attended to, when under the sanction of their country regulations they are supported by authority. It is very common to find men who are taylors, shoe-makers, stocking-weavers, coopers, carpenters, and sawyers of timber ; some of them employ the plane, the saw, the adze, the wimble, and they even groove the deals, for chests. They make hooks for fishing, cast metal-buckles, broaches, and rings for their favourite females. They make nets of different kinds for fishing, with all the other

tackle and necessary implements: some of them even make, as well as mend, their own boats. As for the other implements, as ploughs, harrows, rakes, *cafs chrom*, and *cafs direach*, necessary for husbandry, every man is more or less used to make them. The women wake the cloth on an implement of ten feet long, and three feet broad, made of wicker, called *cleadb luaidh*, and sometimes the frame is made of thick deals, indented or hollowed, to make it rough for the webs. Four or five women sit on each side of this frame, working the cloth to and fro, either by their hands or feet, with a little straw below themselves and this frame, to keep them from the ground. On these occasions, the *iorrams* and *luinneags* begin with great spirit; one of them sings the stanza, while all the rest unite in the chorus, which they repeat twice or thrice after each stanza. The sweet melody of their music seldom fails to collect a number of hearers, who join in the song.

The men wear the short coat, the feila-beg, and the short hose, with bonnets sewed with black ribbons around their rims, and
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a slit behind with the same ribbon in a knot. Their coats are commonly tartan, striped with black, red, or some other colour, after a pattern made, upon a stick, of the yarn, by themselves, or some other ingenious contriver. Their waistcoats are either of the same, or some such stuff; but the feilabegs are commonly of breacan, or fine Stirling plaids, if their money can afford them.

At common work they use either short or long coats and breeches made of striped cloth, and many of them very coarse, according to their work. Their shirts are commonly made of wool; and however coarse they may appear to strangers, they are allowed to conduce much to the health and longevity for which this country is famous; as I have known them eighty, ninety, and some even a hundred years old, in these islands, and able to do their daily work.

When they go in quest of the herring, they dress something like the sailors, but of coarser cloth, with hats over their eyes, to mark the fish the better. They are careful

about drying their nets, and other fishing tackle.

Their brogues (lhoes) are made of cow or horse leather, and often of seals skins, that are commonly well tanned by the root of tormintile, which they dig out from the hillocks, and uncultivated lands, about the sea-side. This, properly pounded and prepared, without either lime or bark, is sufficient to make the hides pliant and fit for wearing. It answers their purpose much better than leather tanned with lime or bark, because they seldom grow hard or shrink when dried, even though wet all day; which is not the case with such as are burnt with lime. They never use tan-pits, but bind the hides fast with ropes, and hold them for several days in some remote solitary stream, until the hair begins to come off, of its own accord; and after that, the tormintile roots are applied for bark, as above described. Such of the men as can afford them, wear large forest coats above their other garb, especially on Sundays, or at the public meetings, as weddings, burials, or fairs. Either in this or a
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coarse breacan (*i. e.* the plaid) with their best apparel, they appear on these solemn occasions; but many of those who are poor, and cannot afford it, often do and must appear in their tattered clothes and dirty shirts, without either stockings or brogues, quite bare-footed, even in frost and snow, in distress sufficient to extort compassion from every person, but such tyrants as are the cause of so much misery to those starved creatures, who are often creeping along with white or striped petticoats belonging to their wives, or daughters and sisters, about their shoulders.

The women wear long or short gowns, with a waistcoat and two petticoats, mostly of the stripes or tartan, as already described, except the lower coat, which is white. The married wives wear linen mutches, or caps, either fastened with ribbons of various colours, or with tape straps, if they cannot afford ribbons. All of them wear a small plaid, a yard broad, called *guilechan*, about their shoulders, fastened by a large broach. The broaches are generally round, and of silver, if the wearer be in tolerable circumstances: if poor, the broaches, being either cir-

cular or triangular, are of baser metal and modern date. The first kind has been worn time immemorial even by the ladies. The *arri-fats* are quite laid aside in all this country, by the different ranks of women; being the most ancient dress used by that class. It consisted of one large piece of flannel, that reached down to the shoe, and fastened with clasps below, and the large silver brooch at the breast, while the whole arm was entirely naked. The ladies made use of the finer, while common women used coarser kinds of flannel, or white woollen cloths. The married women bind up their hair with a large pin into a knot on the crown of their heads, below their linens; and the unmarried frequently go bare-headed, with their hair bound up with ribbons, or garters. They often wear linen caps, called mutches, particularly on Sabbaths. Many of the more wealthy appear at church with a profusion of ribbons and head-dresses, with cloaks, and high-heeled shoes. Those whose circumstances cannot admit of that, must appear with one of their petticoats, either tartan, or of one colour, around their shoulders, on Sundays, as well as on week days. They seldom
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dom travel any where without this appendage; nay, in the house, when at such work as will admit of it; seeing it would be thought naked in a woman to go without it: it also defends them from the inclemency of the weather. Most of them wear napkins, or handkerchiefs, on their necks; and many of the richest of them use silk ones, whether black or spotted, as suits their fancies.

Frequently the old women wear little *guilechans*, (small plaids) about their shoulders, and woollen hoods about their heads, with very coarse linen under them fastened with a pin below their chins. The *breeid*, or *curtah*, a fine linen handkerchief fastened about married women's heads, with a flap hanging behind their backs, above the *guilechan*, is mostly laid aside.

Most of the poorer tenants cannot afford to wear brogues in Summer, unless they are obliged to be treading among the sharp rocks on the shores, at their master's kelp, when the master must supply them, except they can afford to provide for themselves. It would be too great a luxury for a poor one
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to use them, unless at the same, or similar rugged employment. Nothing short of extreme necessity obliges them to appear in public meetings in these humiliating garbs ; for otherwise their pride would revolt at the very thought of such shabby dresses.

They converse familiarly with one another by the term of *naby*, or neighbour ; or *carrid*, a friend ; *ghaole*, or *cagger*, love ; and such endearing expressions ; but, though naturally, frank, they are very reserved to strangers at first : yet they modestly ask a vast many questions from every stranger whom they chance to meet ; that being the only vehicle through which they can hear of public transactions carried on in the country or nation at large.

On that account, any man that wishes to pass the nights at any of their huts, must be at pains to collect all the news, by making regular enquiries, as he passes along, and when they are carefully arranged, and properly delivered, he is sure of meeting with a hearty reception. His history is believed
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like oracles, which they faithfully retail to their neighbours ; and are sure of reciprocal returns on similar occasions, displaying the same inquisitive spirit and hospitality with the Germans, as described by Tacitus.

The huts of the oppressed tenants are remarkably naked and open ; quite destitute of furniture, except logs of timbers collected from the wrecks of the sea, to sit on about the fire, which is placed in the middle of the house, or upon seats made of straw, like foot hassacks, stuffed with straw or stubble. Many of them must rest satisfied with large stones placed around the fire, in order. As all persons must have their own blankets to sleep in, they make their beds in whatever corner suits their fancy, and in the mornings they fold them up into a small compass, with all their gowns, cloaks, coats, and petticoats, that are not in use.

The cows, goats, and sheep, with the ducks, hens, and dogs, must have the common benefit of the fire, and particularly the young

young and tenderest are admitted next to it.

This filthy sty is never cleaned but once a-year, when they place the dung on the fields as manure for barley crops. Thus from the necessity of laying litter below these cattle to keep them dry, the dung naturally increases in height almost mid-wall high, so that the men sit low about the fire, while the cattle look down from above upon the company.

It is true they are at pains to keep the sty as dry as possible, by attending on the their cows with large vessels to throw out the wash; but still it must be wet and unwholesome, and no argument can prevail on them to turn out the dung on a dunghill daily, as they have got the idea impressed on their minds, that the air carries off the strength, if much exposed. Indeed many of them make little or no use of the unmixed dung that is piled up by heaps about their doors; but since the masters have taken much of the kelp, which was their usual manure, from the poor creatures, to burn it
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for the markets, they are forced to make better use of the dung. In the heart of Lewis, where many of the farms are far from the sea, they are necessitated not only to use all manner of cow dung, but even to strip the house of its thatch every Spring, to make an addition to their manure for the lands.

But those farmers who are blessed with the protection of their lairds, live much more comfortably, as they can separate the housed cattle from their fire-sides, by little partitions, but so open as to allow the benefit of the fire to reach their cattle, though still the whole of them, whether rich or poor, keep the cow-houses without cleaning them till Spring.

Every subtenant must have his own beams and other side timbers. Four or five couples, with their complement of side timbers, are reckoned a good sufficiency for a hut. The walls of them are six feet thick, packed with moss or earth in the middle, with a facing of rough stones built on both sides. This is called a stall, and commonly belongs to the

the master : upon this the timbers are erected, as follow :

First, the beams and spars are bound together by ropes made of heather or bent, and placed standing on these stalls. Then the side rafters are fastened with ropes to those beams pretty fast, and the rows of ropes wrought very close, so as to keep the stubble with which the houses are thatched from falling through. For the beams and roof tree, with the side timbers, could not bear the weight of *divats* above them, and therefore the ropes must be the thicker plaited over them.

Having laid the stubble over the side timbers, interwoven with ropes, they secure this thatch with heather ropes thrown across the roof of the huts, and these are fastened below with large stones which are fixed to their ends, and hang dangling over the sides of the walls to keep all fast, that the winds and storms, which are frequent here, may not strip the huts of their covers.

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The moment that a poor man is obliged to remove, he immediately unties the timbers of his hut, and bundles up the rotten thatch, which he wafts in his little Norway smack to the place appointed.

It is then obvious, from the nature of their huts, and the uncertainty of their residence in one place, that their accommodations must be very uncomfortable; I mean only the oppressed ones; that their huts must be unspeakably naked, without furniture, except a loom, or old chest to hold their eatables, and a few plates or sacks made of benty grass. They make a number of bags of sheep-skins for holding their meal, with a few other such articles as fortune and their own ingenuity procure.

Their doors, if they have any shutters, stand mostly open, as they seldom lock them at nights; and their windows are but holes made through the thatch, immediately above the side walls. These, with the chimney top, stand open to admit day-light. These huts, being thus without locks to their doors, and without separate apartments, we need not be surprised

surprised to find the virtue of their women too often severely tried; and no wonder though the poor unprotected females suffer in such circumstances; and they must be miserably exposed in gentlemen's kitchens, where the men and women sleep without any head to keep a kind of awe over them, for all their kitchens are separated from the main dwelling apartments of the family.

Every beggar, male and female, must carry their blankets on their backs in a kind of sack made of grafs, from house to house, to sleep in; and they require to carry no other burthen of meal or other eatables, but they are fed from the same dish with the people in whose house they lodge.

We may observe that this must bear very hard on the poor men and women-servants, who are forced by country statutes to serve almost for nothing, except their scanty bit of bread, and obliged to work at the severe exercises of carrying the panniers full either of sea-ware or horse dung upon their backs; and yet be under the necessity of providing bed and body clothes of their own; even worse

worse off than the beasts of burden, who are commonly furnished with harness, fitted for the yoke or load, by their masters.

The wages of a full-grown active maid amounts to five shillings sterling a year, and lessened or increased in proportion to her age, or supposed merit; and out of these few shillings, she must repay any damage of tea-cups, or other articles that may suffer through her hands.

The yearly wages of the men servants bear the same proportion with the women's; for there are no day-labourers for daily wages here as in other countries---no such thing is ever allowed or encouraged by the oppressors; but such people must become scallags, and yield their labour for less profits than even the young servant men do; for the labourer, or scallag, must hang about his helpless wife and family, whereas the servant man often betakes himself to the sea service, to get out of their reach.

The wages of their men are various. According to the stated country statutes, the
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man who has the management of the farm, and working people to direct, may have from two to three pounds, if very deserving, and the honour of eating his meat by himself, by way of respect. He is honoured by the name of Grey-fear, or Bailiff.

The lower servants may be hired from forty to thirty, and even from twenty to ten shillings per annum. I myself engaged an active lad for my servant for twenty shillings, and he thought himself wonderfully fortunate. He had completed his twentieth year, when he entered my service, and the year preceding he received only ten shillings sterling from his former master, who obliged him to serve most of the former time for less. With his twenty shillings, and the difference of his employment, he dressed like a gentleman in comparison with others of his years; and that lad would think himself rich indeed, with thirty or forty shillings for the following years. But all these common men servants are obliged to make up any damage, either by the breaking in of horses or cattle on green standing corn under night, or the loss of cattle, if under their charge; and
many

many of them also have been obliged, at the expiration of their terms, to leave their oppressors in their debt, until their time of re-entering the service returned again by rotation.

Those servants also receive brogues, to enable them to bear the panniers of sea-weed from the shores, and I leave it to my reader to reflect with himself, whether the man or woman have worn the value of the wages, supposing the highest even forty shillings to the man and five shillings to the woman, though no deductions were made for the little damage sustained through accidents; so that one might fairly conclude that, with bed and body clothes, both these classes of servants are not gainers by their service. But they are only used as beasts of burden, and the masters reap the advantage.

It is but just to observe, that this extreme severity is not used any where over this whole country, except where the country regulations force them into practice; but the profits arising from this lately introduced mode of severity, are so tempting, that it is gaining rather than losing ground even

by those who are inclined to be more humane. Not very many of the old honourable residents force their tenants to remove yearly, from place to place, with their poor families. This mild treatment enables them to make separate apartments for their bed and board, with their little furniture; by which means they separate the sexes; and the women, if they are willing, may protect their virtue from injuries; and their looks and dress bespeak them a different people. As for the poor tenants, who are under the laird's protection, they begin to feel the blessing of emancipation from the yoke of the tacksmen, and look back with compassion on those who still remain under these severe masters.

In defiance of the hardships these oppressed people suffer, they retain part of their former state and dignity, at their meetings and partings. They address one another by the title of gentleman or lady, (*duinuasle* and *bheanuasle*) and embrace one another most cordially, with bonnets off. And they are never known to enter a door without

without blessing the house and people so loud as to be heard, and embracing every man and woman belonging to the family. They both give and receive news, and are commonly entertained with the best fare their entertainers are able to afford.

The beggars are much respected among the commonality. The hosts know that these were once equal, if not superior to themselves in point of wealth; for it unfortunately happens in many parts of this country, when a man becomes so frail as not to be in a capacity to look after his flock of sheep in person, that he is very rapidly stripped of them, and that frequently by his near relations. However astonishing it may appear to strangers, it is a known fact, that those nimble fellows can catch the wildest sheep that feeds on the highest hills by swiftness of foot, and that in the night as well as by day. I have seen boys of twelve years of age, who were so trained to this office, that they would not only run them down, but for diversion suffer them to escape, that they might have the pleasure of a second race, to take them again; and that

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through

through the most rugged rocks and precipices. The sheep, over most of this country, are extremely wild, seeing most of them must be caught by dogs trained for that use; a circumstance which makes them fly at the sight of man or dog; but the thieves dare not use dogs, for fear of being seen, or heard by their noise, and they are bred to catch sheep in their younger days, by their parents, without the use and help of dogs, in broad day, to exercise them.

By the laws of the country no poor man dares make use of a sheep's head for four or five days after she is killed, that every one who pleases may examine the ear-mark. I have seen a sheep's head taken from a man by the real owner, and kept for ten years, to prove the theft against him before the court.

Thus the effects of an old man will soon be devoured by his neighbours. He gradually becomes unfit to do his work, or pay his rents, and of course he must dismantle his house, dispose of his roof, while he must take up his bed and walk about with this burden.

In

In the back settlements of Harris, neither the love of God, nor fear of man, could prevail with a master to allow the scallag the liberty of living under his own roof, to shelter his aged body from the inclemency of the seasons, without taking a little piece of moss, for labour and rent, from the oppressors, who make the best of the lands; nor are huts allowed in Harris, without lands, and for their service. But a friendly disposition towards the poor is manifested by the gentlemen towards the poor gentlemen and ladies of their order, that sink through misfortunes or extravagance. These are admitted to their better tables, and used with easy familiarity.

They burn the straw of the sheaf, to make the oats dry for meal: and though the grain is black by the ashes, and the meal coloured, yet it is not unpleasant to the taste, and it is thought to be very wholesome food. This, with most of their oatmeal, they grind on *braals*, a kind of mill similar to the quern, but made of harder stone, and of the same magnitude with quern millstones, being about three feet in diameter, and four or

five inches thick. The uppermost stone is turned round by the hand of one or two women, who grind as much meal, evening and morning, as serves for the day.

They have also some of the old Highland mills, that are driven about by water. Those mills are rude, and extremely simple in their constructions, being only one wheel that drives round the spindle, which is fastened to the upper grinding millstone. These mills are slow, and at such distances from the huts of the tenants, that in general they prefer their *braabs* or querns.

Their cakes are made of barley meal, and roasted against a stone placed upright before a good fire; and sometimes, when either haste or hunger impels them, they are laid on the ashes, with more ashes above, to bake them more quickly. The people eat twice a day. The first meal is called *deinnar* or breakfast, the last is their supper. They seldom break fast, unless from some necessary haste, before eleven o'clock; and the supper, when night drives them home from their labour, is placed before them.

· Potatoes

Potatoes and fish generally make up their first meal, and the whole family commonly eat out of one dish called the *claar*. This large dish is between three and four feet in length, and a foot and a half in breadth, made up of deal. They place the straw or grass on the bottom, and pour out the potatoes and fish above that stratum, which they generally collect carefully, with the fragments, for some favourite cow. Their last meal is generally made up of *brochan*, (a kind of water gruel) boiled mutton, with bread and potatoes, at their own houses, if in any tolerable circumstances, and under mild masters : but no such luxuries are to be met in any other kitchens, nor can it be expected in the families of the oppressed. These must search for cuddies, or such fish as are on the coasts, such as cod, dog-fish, saiths, skait, &c.

In time of eating these poor meals, their doors are generally shut, and few people chuse to enter when they find them shut. It is difficult to account for this general custom among a people so universally hospitable. They can assign no reason for this churlish
piece

piece of conduct but custom. I suppose it took its origin from the times that that country, as well all Scotland, was infested by a set of robbers called *Cearnachs*, who went about in bands fully armed, and would force their way into any house where they supposed any meat could be found, and generally took it by force. . Probably the impression of those practices remained on the minds of succeeding generations ; and that practice originating in necessity, obtained the force of a custom, and continued long after that necessity ceased.

Indeed all the Scots, even to the fourteenth century, were strangers to the luxuries of life. When Randolph, Earl of Murray, and Sir James Douglas, in the reign of Robert Bruce, invaded the north of England, and after Douglas had performed extraordinary feats of prowess, the Scots returned home, and left some hundred bags made of deer skins, all full of water and flesh for the use of the men ; and a thousand wooden spits, with meat on them, which was roasted. They were so contrived as to answer for kettles. " And," Macpherson observes, in his Dissertation,

tation, "that this one specimen of simple cookery is still used among the Highlanders in hunting parties." Nay, I spoke with a man who saw the thief boiling a bag full of meat with a gentle fire held below, while he constantly rubbed the bottom with grease, fastened to a stick, to keep it from burning."

Both men and women are fond of tobacco; the men commonly chew it, and beg a little from every gentleman; and there is no travelling through those countries without a certain quantity of that article in company. The gentlemen fill their nostrils with long quids of it, and these, when thrown away, are gathered carefully by the poorer sort, for a second turn. Instances can be produced, where a servant has consumed his whole yearly wages on this single article of luxury.

In passing to and from the islands, tobacco is necessary to a gentleman, if he wishes to avoid both delay and imposition. Here it deserves to be remarked, that though the gentlemen do squeeze subtenants themselves; yet they do not discourage, nay, some of
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the baser kind of masters encourage the poor oppressed creatures to make heavy charges on strangers; and I could produce instances when complaints were justly lodged against imposition. To prevent those gross charges, any knowing man will deal his tobacco liberally, and in that event, he is sure of a speedy and very cheap passage, *or convoy*, through the different isles.

The men keep their tobacco in leather bags made of seal skins, called *spleuchans*, which keep the tobacco soft and tastely.

The old women make use of their tobacco in snuff made into graddan, the same with the Irish blackguard, which they generally keep in sea nuts that grow on the large tangles or red sea-ware, and which are sometimes found upon the shores. This nut is about seven inches in circumference, and one half inch thick, full of kernel, which is carefully digged out through a small round hole made on purpose. Out of this hole the snuff is shaken on the palms of their hands, and taken out with a pen made for the purpose. These shells, or nuts, are very precious,

cious, and by the richer people are bound in silver. There are several other kinds of sea-nuts, of different makes, that are held in high veneration among the vulgar for their supposed efficacy on several occasions, and they are particularly used about children.

The common, as well as better sort of people, court sweet-hearts at nights, over all this country. The unlocked doors yield those lovers but too easy access to their favourites. The natural consequences of their rencounters often occasion squabbles in kirk courts, in which the minister and elders take cognizance of the fornication committed in the parish.

This inquisitorial office is generally more agreeable to the elders, than to the ministers, as they are the more ignorant and insignificant, and consequently require more the prop. of other people's failings. In cases, however, in which the ministers are governed either by a druidical rigour of temper, or by hypocrisy, they too exercise great severity against the incontinent, in various parts of Scotland; as
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the reader will find in the ingenious Captain Newte's Tour. This severity, however, is not often productive of the amendment pretended to be designed. I say *pretended*, for in many instances they, who are at least shrewdly suspected of lewdness, as well as intemperance themselves, are the severest and most curious and prying inquisitors into the failings of others.

In the part of the country we are describing, however, this frailty still prevails with the favourite fair, and her intercourse is frequently with so many men, that the unfortunate girl is often at a nonplus where to fix with certainty; but she seldom fails to give up the gentleman or single man, to save the married man and herself from the shame of doing penance in a white sheet. The rich man, indeed, finds a substitute, by giving a little bribe, and a great many fine promises, both to the woman and the ostensible father. As the poor young men cannot pay for substitutes, the contending parties must submit the issue of their cause to an oath; and the affidavit of the suspected satisfies the accuser, and the
bastard

bastard is as much esteemed as the lawfully begotten child.

The woman, if she is pregnant by a gentleman, is by no means looked down upon, but is provided in a husband with greater eclat than without forming such a connection. Instead of being despised, numberless instances can be produced, where pregnant women have been disputed for, and even fought for, by the different suitors.

Their daily implements of fishing are the rod, and the *taubb*, or net. This last is a pock-net, bound round a large circular ring of wands or hoops, and that tied to the end of a long pole of eight feet in length. By throwing a little boiled wilks, chewed out of their mouths, over the top of it, when sunk below the surface, the cuddies will get in after the meat, and when they are on the bottom, the upper part is elevated above the sea, and some hundreds are caught, at times, at each dipping.

Instead of iron crooks they use a stick of four feet long, full of holes, with a pin to pass

pass through to raise or lower their pots when placed above their fires. The pots are suspended from the roof, in the middle of the house, by a rope made of bent grass. They make a kind of coarse crockery ware, for boiling water and dressing victuals.

They make very neat wooden locks, both for their doors and chests. They are made of the same materials: and I have seen pieces of wooden workmanship, such as trunks, chests, and tobacco-pipes, so well made, and elegantly engraved, as would not disgrace the most capital artists.

Gâlic is the common language over all this country: but their intercourse with fishers and passengers to and from other countries, introduce a mixture of words from the English and other nations. This mixture will gradually spoil that nervous expressive tongue.

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* It may be worthy of remark here, that notwithstanding the various improvements in lock-making for centuries past, none that I have heard of has been proof against the pick-lock, except that invented by BRAMAH, of Piccadilly, London, which is constructed upon the principle of this rude implement.

The poor are totally destitute of letters. All the laudable and charitable contributions sent for instructing them in the knowledge of the Scriptures, have been wantonly perverted by artful, designing politicians; as will appear when we speak of the religious institutions established by law.

The men are extremely fond of spirituous liquors, when they can fall in with them. When they can meet with a cask, they seldom part with it, till it is emptied. The quarrels arising from drunkenness are more general than the combats of Englishmen;—and more hurtful, as the victors do not spare the prostrate enemy.

In Lewis, the islands of Harris and the Uists, they make whiskey of oats, but not of barley. They have also abundance of rum, brandy, gin, and wines, which are smuggled into the country: but the charges made in retailing of these spirits become so extravagant, that the poor people cannot easily touch any. On certain solemn occasions, however, they have recourse to those foreign spirits. Had Mr. Pennant, at those
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times, passed a few hours among them, he would have found they are not quite confined to the common beverage of whiskey. I never saw or heard of the heath, or such materials as he mentions, used in distilling spirits in any of those islands. Nothing is made use of but pure malt unmixed; and their spirits are, on these accounts, allowed to be superior in quality to any adulterated liquors elsewhere.

The lower order of people value themselves much on their connections with the rich. Connections often arise from the time that a mother, wife, or sister, gave suck to the gentleman's child; whence they call them *coalds*, co-fostered, or fosterlings. This appellation is used by all the family, as well as by the child whose mother's milk suckled the great man's child. This familiar epithet is no less useful to the rich than to the poor man; because, if the rich man countenances the poor, the last, in return, will think himself interested in protecting the flocks, and other effects of the rich; so that this tie of friendship being reciprocally useful, is continued for generations.

Most

Most of those people are inferior to none in seafaring. From their infancy they are trained to it. Making of small boats, with masts, is the common pastime of the children; and they are delighted with sailing in boats when very young; but when they are able to handle the oars and sails, they are truly active; and they seldom return home without fish, even when scarce on the coast. They never lose sight of their object either by night or day. Whether foul or fair weather, they are exercised when the fish is in great plenty, and if they had salt, with the proper implements for those purposes afforded to others, their superiority would soon become conspicuous on that element.

But, their genius is forced to run in an unnatural channel, by tying them down to work like so many negroes, with the whip smacking along their backs. They never will become dexterous at farming, that line of life being contrary to the natural bent of their inclinations.

The tenants repair to the hills all Summer with their cattle, and live in *shealings*;

that is, in huts, made in the hills for the Summer residence of those who tend the flocks and herds. There the families live mostly on milk, butter, and cheese, and fish; and by the time they return to their farms, the grass about their corn fields becomes excellent, and makes the cows yield plenty of milk. This is the case where the tenantry live comfortably under the protection of the proprietors, as they do in Lewis, and in some instances in the two Uists; but cannot be so much so in Harris, because all the horses from the different islands are sent to the King's forest, where they devour most of the grass belonging to the back-settlers, who border on this forest; insomuch, that those people, in addition to their grievances, must bear with this also; and their own corn, as well as grass, is frequently destroyed by numbers of hungry horses. This is an intolerable grievance to those unlucky men; that they are often stript of the fruits of their labours, without redress.

The poor tenants observe the holidays about Christmas, and keep them very cheerfully. Some of the humane tacksmen give them

them treats on one or more of those days, and send for a musician to make their sub-tenants happy. But the more modern incumbents drop those expensive feasts, and their tenants may fast while those of others are feasting. Notwithstanding all the ill usage that some of those people suffer, they bring their masters the first fruits of their own potatoes and meal from time to time, and supply their tables also with such fish as they can catch for their own families, beyond the rigorous extortions made upon them by paction. They take every method they can to sooth those tyrannical people; in order to alleviate their own burthens, by their engaging manner towards their masters;

CHAP. V.

Of St. Kilda.

THE antient Herta at present belongs to the laird of Harris, and is known by the name of Saint Kilda. This island is situated in the north-west Atlantic Ocean, about 20 leagues south-west of Harris. It is about three miles in length ; the soil fertile, the little valleys delightful, and the air salubrious and pure. There is an ancient fort in the south end of the bay, called Dunfir Volg. The arable land hardly exceeds eighty acres ; but more might be added. These produce plentifully, either corn, barley, or potatoes, and rye ; of which the tacksmen shares liberally every year. The hills and pasture grounds are fully stocked with cows, sheep, and lambs.

About twenty-seven families reside on this island constantly ; and are, perhaps,
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the most useful people on earth to enrich their master, by their industry in the fields, and their unrivalled alertness among the rocks.

The cows and sheep are thought to be rather lower in stature here than in the adjacent isles. The inhabitants are decreasing in number from what they were in the end of the last century, being then one hundred and eighty in number; whereas in Mr. Macaulay's time (anno 1764) when missionary there, they decreased to about eighty. In Mr. Martin's time, their service was much lighter, and their persons less exposed to danger among those fatal rocks, in collecting feathers for their masters. But their present master having forgot his former insignificance, has assumed all the turbulent pride of a purse-proud pedagogue, to keep them under.

There are four or five hills in the island, but Congara is, without exaggeration, the highest, and a real prodigy of its kind; it commands a tract of sea and land more than one hundred and forty miles in extent. It

hangs over the sea in a most frightful manner : a sight of it from the sea astonishes, and from above strikes the spectator with horror. Its perpendicular height was found by Mr. Macaulay to be nine hundred fathoms. Few strangers will venture so near the edge of this stupendous precipice, as to look down to the sea immediately below them ; yet the natives think nothing of it,

There are considerable hills in the small isles of Boreray and Soay, contiguous to St. Kilda, being about six miles distant, and these are fully stocked with sheep, and no small temptation for an avaricious master. Accordingly it is said, that those harmless people were forced to protect their flocks by force, about the beginning of this century, from their master, who demanded a sheep extraordinary from each family yearly ; putting them in mind of a precedent of their having given an equal number to his predecessor. But they answered, that that was a voluntary gift, and on an extraordinary occasion, when he was wind-bound in the island, but was not to be a custom afterwards. However, the tacksmen sent a considerable

siderable number of men to take them by force ; but the natives armed themselves with their fishing and fowling implements, gave them some blows, and forced them to retire, and would not pay that tax. By this stout resistance they preserved their freedom for that time ; but alas ! these days are now no more.

There is only one landing-place around all the island, and even there, except in a calm, there is no landing ; while the rest of the isle is surrounded by the most tremendous rocks, hanging perpendicularly over the boisterous ocean ; the most awful that ever the eye beheld.

These exalted rocks, in spite of the terrible surges that frequently wash their summits, and make a noise like a perpetual roar of thunder, are nevertheless more carefully divided among the inhabitants of this solitary isle than their very corn fields,

This is the theatre on which they are mostly exercised, and of course are best acquainted there with, however awful and for-

forbidding these precipices may appear to others. The most of their time is employed among those cliffs and coves, over all the faces of those monstrous rocks, in quest of eggs and fowls: the first is used for their diet, and most of the last stripped of their feathers for their master's use. He makes a rich market of them at Liverpool, where they are fitted up for beds and other purposes.

The art of the St. Kildians at catching fowls under the cloud of night is truly astonishing, and their success no less wonderful.

A man from that island told in a company where I was present, that he was one of the four men that caught four *itts*, or *pens*, being three hundred each, in the whole twelve hundred, solan geese, in one night. That bird, after the hard toil of the day at fishing without intermission, rising high in the air to get a full sight of the fish that he marks out for his prey before he pounces upon it, and each time devouring it before he rises above the surface, becomes so fatigued at night, that he sleeps quite sound, in company

pany with some hundreds, who mark out some particular spot in the face of the rocks, to which they repair at night, and think themselves secure under the protection of a centinel, who stands awake to watch their lives, and give the alarm, by *bir, bir*, in time of danger, to awaken those under his guard.

The St. Kildians watch with great care on what part of the island these birds are most likely to light at night: and this they know by marking out on which side of the island the play of fish are, among which the geese are at work the whole day; because in that quarter they are ready to betake themselves to sleep at night. And when they are fairly alighted, the fowlers repair to the place with their panniers, and ropes of thirty fathoms in length, to let them down with profound silence in their neighbourhood---to try their fortunes among the unwary throng.

The fowler, thus let down by one or more men, who hold the rope lest he should fall over the impending rocks into the sea, with
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a white towel about his breast, calmly slides over the face of the rocks till he has a full view of the centinel ; then he gently moves along on his hands and feet, creeping very silently to the spot where the centinel stands on guard. If he cries *bir, bir*, the sign of an alarm, he stands back ; but if he cries *grog, grog*, that of confidence, he advances without fear of giving an alarm, because the goose takes the fowler for one of the straggling geese coming into the camp, and suffers him to advance. Then the fowler very gently tickles one of his legs, which he lifts and places on the palm of his hand ; he then as gently tickles the other, which in like manner is lifted and placed on the hand. He then no less artfully than insensibly moves the centinel near the first sleeping goose, which he pushes with his fingers ; on which he awakes, and finding the centinel standing above him, he immediately falls a fighting him for his supposed insolence. This alarms the whole camp, and instead of flying off they all begin to fight through the whole company ; while in the mean time the common enemy, unsuspected, begins in good earnest to twist their necks, and never gives

gives up till the whole are left dead on the spot.

This goose is almost as large as a land goose, of a white colour, except the tops of the wings, which are black, and the top of the head, which is yellow. The bill is long and sharp-pointed, extremely hard, and pierces an inch deep into wood. There is an Act of Parliament against the cruel manner of fastening herring on planks far out at sea, to catch these darling geese, and a severe penalty against transgressors of this inhuman act. A well supported fact concerning the strength of this fowl, is told by one of the tacksmen of this island. Once when sailing towards St. Kilda, and entering upon a field of sea where the geese were busy darting among the fish, from on high, on each side of the large barge in which he sat, and sailing fast before the wind, the barge passed over a fish so quickly that a goose who had marked it out, and rushing so violently through the air, instead of the fish, on account of the unforeseen accident, darted his strong bill quite through the barge, and was actually carried back to Harris dead, with his bill through

through the plank, as a testimony of the fact.

The nests of the solan geese, not to mention others, are so very close, that when one walks between them, the hatching fowls, on either side, can always take hold of one's clothes; and, says Mr. Martin, will often sit still till they are attacked, rather than expose their eggs to be destroyed by the sea gulls. Their mates furnish them with food while they hatch.

The season for catching the old solan geese, is before they begin to lay. About the middle of May is the time of gathering their eggs.

The young solan geese are larger, than their mothers before they begin to fly, being extremely fat. That on their breast is very deep. The grease is kept in bags made of the stomach of the old geese. They call it *giban biurtach*. They have never but one egg at a hatching, in any nest at St. Kilda. They lay again, and even a third time, if deprived of the first egg. The gulls have
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more at a time. The solan goose can carry five herrings at a time to his mate or young, and spue them out of his gorget in the nest. This fowl digests so quickly, that instances are given when the bird was shot immediately as he appeared above the surface ; and the fish was found half digested in his stomach, that was just devoured below.

The Fulmar is highly esteemed among the St. Kildians, for its many good qualities ; for they think the world cannot produce any thing to equal it in value. The fulmar furnishes oil for the lamp, down for the bed, the most salubrious food, and the most efficacious ointment for healing of wounds ; in a word, says the poor St. Kildians, deprive us of the fulmar, and St. Kilda is no more.

This fowl lays no more than one egg in a season ; the least offence makes her quit her nest, so nice are her feelings, and therefore it is a high crime in St. Kilda to plunder its nest of the egg.

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The young ones of this species are in season in August. The moment he is attacked in his nest, he squirts the oil in their faces; therefore the fowlers surprise him, to preserve the oil. It is thought that the fulmar picks its food from the fat of whales, or other fat fish, because of such quantities of oil, perhaps a quart or two at a time, which the natives preserve when they catch the young by surprise, not only for their lamps, but also as a catholicon for diseases, and have used it for that purpose. The fulmar is a grey fowl about the size of a moor-hen. It has a strong bill, with wide nostrils. It sits on the rock, when the wind is to blow from any quarter, and it is said to be a certain sign of westerly wind when it goes to sea.

The Lavie is another species of the St. Kilda birds. These visit the island in February, being the first that appear in the season. The people congratulate each other on the auspicious presage of their approaching happiness. At this time they settle the operations of their campaign, and divide their people into parties.

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This bird resembles a duck, though rather longer ; lays its eggs on the bare rock, and if not carefully touched, they tumble in great showers over the rocks. Sometimes one man catches four hundred lavies before he touches the rope to haul them up. After these are hauled up, the adventurer also is hauled up, and is highly praised for his activity.

This fowl supplies the wants of the St. Kildians when their fresh mutton is exhausted. Then the solan goose is in season ; after that the puffins, with a variety of eggs ; and when their appetites are cloyed with this food, the salubrious fulmar, with their favourite young solan goose, (called *Goug*) crowns their humble tables, and holds out all the Autumn.

In Winter they have a greater stock of bread, mutton, potatoes, and fallad, or *risted* fowls, than they can consume. In spite of their hard usage, they enjoy more human felicity, than any small or great nation of slaves, in St. Kilda, though the dearest place on earth.

The puffins hatch under ground, and are easily found out by a hole dug by their beaks. They have dogs trained up for this purpose: these are a species of terrier or spaniel. The women are much exercised in fowling; and the dogs find them out, and bring the birds of their own accord to the tops of the rocks.

The people live all Summer on two kinds of these puffins; for there are more sorts of them than one, and so numerous, that they not only cover whole plots of ground; but when on wing, they cover every thing below them in a kind of darkness, like a small cloud of locusts in another country.

At St. Kilda there is a large kind of sea-gull, called a *Fuilag*, as large as a solan goose, that infests the birds by breaking their eggs, often killing the young, and many of the old fowls. These good-natured people discover their greatest rage, at seeing or hearing of this cruel enemy; they exert their whole address to catch it, and then excell the Indians in torturing this imp of hell. They pluck out its eyes, sew its wings together, and

and send him adrift. They extract the meat out of its egg, and the animal sits on it till it pines away. To eat its egg would be accounted flagitious, and worthy of a monster only. This fowl is white in the breast, black in wings, and blewish on the back.

The Gare Fowl is four feet long, and supposed to be the pigeon of South America. Its egg is said to exceed that of a goose, as much as the latter exceeds the egg of a hen, which it lays close by the sea-side, being incapable from its bulk of soaring up to the cliffs. It appears in July, and even then but rarely, for it does not visit St. Kilda yearly.

Fowls are also caught by gins; and Mr. Martin* mentions one extraordinary escape, when he visited that island. One of their number was entangled by one of his own gins: when his toe got into the noose, he fell down the rock, and hung by the toe, the gin being strong enough to hold him for the space of a night twenty fathoms above the sea, until a neighbour heard him, and rescued him next morning.

They have been known to preserve two thousand solan geese, young and old, all Winter, in their store houses, of which they have scores, for keeping their fowls and eggs. The least of their baskets will contain four hundred eggs; and they have been known of a morning to have brought home twenty large baskets full from the rocks; and many of them will hold eight hundred eggs of lesser size. Instead of salt they use peat ashes for preserving their fowls and eggs. These are unpleasant to such as are unaccustomed to eat of them, being generally too harsh to the taste.

Their village is placed on the east side of the island of St. Kilda, which they call their country, and the little isles of Boreray and Soay are named the north country. Their houses are low, and flat roofed, and the avenue between them is called the high-street. They have niches made in the sides of their walls, about five feet from the ground, to sleep on; and instead of feather beds they use straw or heath. As they keep their cattle's dung in their houses, as in Harris, placing one stratum of earth well tramped with fresh litter below their cattle, the floor and fire are raised
about

about five feet above the ground by the time this augen stable is cleaned out in Spring.

These are a few of their singular methods of catching birds among the rocks, and to such as would see them perform within the walls of gentlemen's houses, their alertness is no less astonishing than diverting, when they scramble along the ceilings; but it is terror itself to look at them among the cliffs at this diversion. A clergyman of my acquaintance was witness to two noted bird-catchers among the ablest of them, and was almost terrified to look down at them. One fixed himself on a craggy shelf, his companion went down sixty fathoms below him, and having darted himself from the face of one of the most tremendous rocks, he began to play his tricks, singing and laughing very merrily; but so terrified was the clergyman, that he could not for his life run over half the scene with his eyes.

After playing all the antic tricks and entertainment of his art, he returned in triumph with strings of fowls about his neck, and a number of eggs in his bosom. The

people were inexpressibly happy, but the minister was extremely shocked at this uncommon trial of skill.

The man who holds the rope plants himself so firmly on a shelf of the rock, that he has been known to sustain the other, after falling the whole length of the rope.

These people for certain excell all the people in Britain at climbing. It happened once that their boat was split to pieces on the west side of Boreray Island; and they were forced to take hold on a bare rock, which was steep, and above twenty fathoms high. Notwithstanding this difficulty, some of them climbed up to the top of the rock, and let down a rope from thence, with plaids, to draw up all the boat's crew; a circumstance incredible to strangers, and impossible to any but themselves to surmount. In this island they were forced to remain until the season returned for their oppressor to visit the isle for his dues; and that only happens twice a year. Let any man of reflection consider the wretched state of these men, without food, fire, or cover from the wintry blast, during
the

the long nights—with the unhappy situation of their poor forlorn families at home, not knowing but their husbands, parents, and brothers, had been sent to eternity ; and who, though within six miles of St. Kilda, were deprived of a six shilling Norway yaul to go in quest of them, dead or alive.

Melancholy were their looks, when their lordly master carried them home.

How cruel and impolitic does the heritor of this isle behave to these brave men !

The imprudent part of the laird's conduct lies in not placing those under his own protection, as other tenants, and receiving his rents from themselves. In that case, instead of eight, or even ten pounds yearly rent, he might be in the receipt of more than double that sum. One half of the dues paid annually by the tenants to the tacksmen, would enable them to live with more comfort to themselves, and greater advantage to the laird. Then they could join in a large barge, and repair to markets with their goods, and

enrich themselves with their unrivalled industry. We have seen part of their labours and danger, and we shall by and by remark, how they are rewarded by their masters for whom they risk their lives daily.

Out of eighty acres of land they must pay fifty bolls of barley and potatoes yearly; and he keeps his own dairy-maid on the island to receive every drop of their milk to make butter and cheese for supplying his own table; this must be carefully collected evening and morning; and the remainder he sends to the market. The high price of feathers, and the immense quantities collected by these people, increase the tackman's income immensely. All this, with the barley and potatoes, for the trifle of eleven guineas rent yearly; to which sheep and lambs must be added. According to the laws of this land, every householder must pay to the person he calls his master, every second he lamb, every seventh fleece, and every tenth she lamb. These sheep are wonderfully fruitful, many of them having four, and often three lambs at a time; as one of the people assured my friend,

friend, Mr. Macaulay, that in the course of thirteen months, one sheep increased his flock with nine more ; the ewe brought forth three lambs in the month of March, three more in the same month the next year after; and each of the lambs had one before they were thirteen months old. Yet in proportion to the number of sheep every man possesses, he must pay this heavy tax, which becomes very profitable to the tacksmen, but proportionably iniquitous and oppressive to the poor ignorant St. Kildians, who must bear their own country acts, many of them unknown to their lairds, and almost all of them to the laws of this realm.

Well, indeed, might a certain gentleman who visited St. Kilda, declare that all their cattle are more beneficial to the master than to the people—for having an old prescriptive right to their milk from May to Michaelmas, and, I am afraid, to the end of time, these people will be at the mercy of some tacksmen or other.

Though the infamous pot-penny and fire-penny are dropt, as the people have got pots and flints of their own, yet there may
be

be many other mean practices exercised over those harmless people, without their having an opportunity of conveying those grievances to the ears of the public, with whom they can have little intercourse. However, the above is no slender specimen of their bad usage.

As no stranger sailing by, ever ventures to land on this boisterous island to barter with the natives, they must be supplied with all marketable necessaries from their master's shop. And one may easily conjecture on which side the balance lies, on those occasions.

The people of St. Kilda, from the nature of their food, emit a disagreeable odour. Fishes in general abound with much oil, and are often rancid on the stomach, and affect the very sweat with a disagreeable smell, that offends the olfactory nerves of delicate constitutions; and no wonder, though those water-fowls that daily feed on fish, should partake much of the same taste and smell—and this is particularly the case of the solan goose, whose flesh tastes exactly of fish.

The

The men and women here are more chaste than those of Harris are known to be.

The women are more handsome, as well as modest; they marry young, and address strangers with profound respect.

Both men and women delight much in singing; and their voices are abundantly tuneful. Their genius and natural vein for poetry is no wise inferior to the other natives of the Hebrides. Their songs are wonderfully descriptive, and discover great strength of fancy. The subjects of their songs are the accomplishments of their fair friends among the female sex; and the heroic actions of their fowlers in climbing rocks, catching fowls, and fishing, and melancholy deaths over the rocks.

The men there, as in Harris, sing aloud when tugging at the oars, and exert their lungs and strength in animating the party by their united iorrams in the chorus of these songs, which are adapted to the business in hand.

They are not addicted to the vice of drinking, so detestable in others. That article of luxury is wisely kept back from them : as intoxication, from their dangerous profession, might soon unpeople the island. The men and women are equally ingenious ; the women at weaving webbs, and the men at other handicrafts. Being there strangers to the superfluities, they rest satisfied with the common necessities of life.

The men and women dress in the same form that the Hebrideans do, and are possessed of an equal share of pride and ambition of appearing gay on Sundays and holidays, with other people.

Their language is Gâlic, unadulterated, having no communication with strangers, to corrupt it with other languages.

Buchanan writes, that in his time the inhabitants of Herta were totally ignorant. But the proprietor sent a priest along with his procurator yearly to baptize their children, and in the absence of the priest every one baptized his own child ; often their midwife

wife performed that ceremony. In this state the people continued for a hundred years after, until an ignorant fanatic impostor grossly imposed on the people, by claiming tythes; but a part of them refused to pay that tribute, alledging he was unqualified for the profession, as he could not repeat the Lord's Prayer.

Fifty years after his time, another dangerous impostor formed a design of raising a little spiritual empire among them: his name was Rore, and he had penetration enough to find out that ignorance was the mother of devotion.

This native of Herta, though ignorant of letters, had great natural parts. Full of his own abilities, he laid a design of enslaving the whole community, and making himself lord of their consciences, freedom, and fortunes.

He imposed a false religion on them, which he pretended he had been taught by John Baptist, and in his prayer he spoke of Eli as their preserver, and maintained he met with him

him on a fertile little hill, which he called his bush, which was sacred, and any cow or sheep that would taste of its grass was to be instantly killed ; of which he himself behoved to share liberally during the feast. He taught that each of them had titular saints in heaven to interceed for them, whose anniversary behoved to be kept by a splendid feast for each ; and that Rore himself was to be partaker. The women were all brought to his creed, and a criminal prosecution was instantly begun against any who was hardy enough to oppose him, by making them walk over a large beach of loose round stones, without moving them, which would truly be a great miracle, as the stones are round and loose. In case, however, a stone ginkled, her punishment was, to stand naked under a cataract and a mighty torrent of water ; let down with great force upon her head and body. Private confession was his great engine, and the greatest secrecy was enjoined, under the pain of hell fire.

But he was at last, with great intreaty, enticed on board a vessel, and carried to Sky, where he made public confession of his crimes,

crimes, and was never allowed to return to St. Kilda.

These people at present profess the Protestant religion. Their clergyman is illiterate, farther than his little knowledge of the English language. At St. Kilda he studied his divinity from his father, who was a poor man that failed in his circumstances, being a farmer and mechanic in Uist, before he was clothed with the character of a minister, and was sent to officiate among those people; in which capacity he continued till his death opened the vacancy for his son, who was judged qualified to explain the English Bible into Gâlic.

The salary annexed to this office is about twenty-five pounds per annum, being mostly a mortification of three hundred marks left by a gentleman of the name of Macleod, to be given to any name-sake, who can answer the above purpose; and the rest to be made up by the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland; as no man of letters would be buried from the world for
such

such a small sum. He acts up to this duty to the best of his knowledge.

This island will continue to be famous, from its being the place of imprisonment of the Hon. Lady Grange, who was, by private intrigue, carried out of her own house, and violently put on board a vessel at Leith, unknown to any of her friends, and left her great personal estate in the possession of that very man who entered into this horrid conspiracy against her; he sent her to this wild isle, where she was barbarously used, and at last finished her miserable life, among those ignorant people, who could not speak her language.

A poor old woman told me, that when she served her there, her whole time was devoted to weeping; and wrapping up letters round pieces of cork, bound up with yarn, and throwing them into the sea, to try if any favourable wave would waft them to some Christian, to inform some humane person where she resided, in expectation of carrying tidings to her friends at Edinburgh.

This

This affair happened about the year 1733, owing to some private misunderstanding between her ladyship and Lord Grange, whom she unfortunately married. But the real cause continues a secret, since her ladyship never returned.

This shocking affair would never have been heard of from that quarter, where secrecy is reduced into a solid system of dangerous intrigue, against residing, but unconnected strangers, had not her ladyship prevailed on the minister's wife to go with a letter concealed under her clothes all the way to Glenelg, beyond all the Isles, and deliver the letter into the post-office, where it found its way to her friends. They immediately applied to Parliament, to make enquiry into this barbarous conspiracy; and though a vessel was fitted out from Leith immediately, yet it was supposed a courier was dispatched over land by her enemies, who had arrived at Si. Kilda some time before the vessel. When the latter arrived, to their sad disappointment, they found the lady in her grave. Whether she died by the visitation of God or the wickedness
K of

of man, will for ever remain a secret : as their whole address could not prevail on the minister and his wife, though brought to Edinburgh, to declare how it happened, as both were afraid of offending the great men of that country among whom they were forced to reside.

Some people imagined, that she knew something of the rebellion that broke out in 1745, at that time, and meant to have divulged the secret, which is not very probable.

CHAP. VI.

Modes, Implements, and general State of Husbandry.

THE general manure of the land is seaweed, either cut with sickles, or cast on shore by the violence of the surge. All over the two Uists, and the low lands, as well as the isles about Harris, the carriage of the manure is generally performed by horses, or, where these cannot travel, on the backs of men and women. The furniture of the horses is a kind of rope made of bent grass, which is brought round a wooden saddle, called a cart-saddle, under the animal's belly. Over this frame are hung a couple of panniers, or creels. The wooden saddle is farther secured by a kind of crupper, from three to four feet long, brought round from either side of the girth under the horse's tail. A

band tied tight around his lower jaw supplies the place of a bridle. Three or four of those horses, and sometimes greater numbers, are tied to one another's tails. Some of the gentlemen have begun to introduce carts, which will greatly lessen the number of small horses that have hitherto been thought necessary on farms.

The severe carriage of manure for the land in Spring, and of kelp in Summer, wears out the horses: supplies of which are brought every year, into the other islands of the Western Hebrides, from Lewis.

In the back settlement of Harris, men, women, and children, must be constantly under the panniers, as no horse could be of much use there, where the men can hardly walk with their loads.

One must be a hard-hearted taskmaster that will not pity a poor woman with her petticoats tucked up to her knees, and a heavy load of dung, or wet sea-tangle, on her back, mounting those rugged declivities and steep hills, to the distance of a compleat
mile

mile from the sea before they lay the burdens on the ground. The men work, with skins above their coats under the panniers, and their short sticks in their hands : and neither frost nor snow, wind nor rain, will make them quit their labour till night, when once they are begun, and thoroughly wet.

Their being obliged to use the tangle where the sea casts it on shore, and the grounds nearest the sea being exhausted, is the reason why they must often mount very high up the faces of those horrid mountains, where very little earth is to be found among the craggy rocks ; and they are therefore obliged to collect earth into small spots, by way of ridges. Those little collections are called *feannags*, and the furrows between their ridges or *feannags* are generally six feet wide ; while the strip of a ridge is often less in breadth ; because of the want of earth in some parts, and of the depth of the moss in other places. The furrows in the one case must be also deepened three feet, and the ridges in proportion raised above the water. That of the other is widened, to collect the little earth into a ridge. This renders the

whole back settlements of Harris almost impassable, as a man meets constantly with feannags, and wide furrows to leap over. And indeed travelling through parts of Uist also is dangerous to strangers, because large white fields of dry sand, as far as the eye can reach, resembling new driven snow in whiteness, and driving across the paths, in-somuch that new foot-paths are made daily, without any visible elevated objects to be directed by, one is generally bewildered. This is the case all over the immense plains of white sand left by the ebb, called fords, where the paths are always washed away, and no visible object to direct by. A stranger, on this account, without a guide, is almost sure of losing, not only his way, in going across these broad plains, but also his life. In the hills, and in the northern parts of Harris, there are pillars here and there erected, and stones placed on the top of rocks, where travellers must make a stretch to pass through these zig-zag paths by their direction; otherwise the natives may lose their way, as well as strangers. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to have skilful guides when travelling over either countries.

Figure

Figure out to yourself one of those ridges covered over with thick sea-ware; and a man cutting the sward of the furrow with a spade, (*cafs direach*) and a woman up to the knees in that quag-mire before him, lifting up every turf he cuts, and covering the ware with them, all over the ridges. You see the constant labour of both the sexes, while the spots on the different places where the tangle is to be found, remain unfinished. From this little sketch of their daily labour through Winter and seed-time, in preparing the ground for the grain, with cutting and carrying the sea-ware and horse dung to the fields, I refer to any man, whether the five shillings a year for wages are not laboriously earned, even though they were not to refund little damages. Some of the tacksmen are so inhumanly rigorous, as to deprive the poor people of their miserable pittance, under that pretence: others, with all their severity, keep none of their little earnings back. Frequently, indeed, their wages do not amount to five shillings: unless they are the principal servants, they have still less.

The sea-ware will make any foil produce luxuriant crops of barley and potatoes, but the oats do not succeed so well by far over the country, as the grain is generally small. The great oats have been tried without success, as they soon dwindle down into small grain. The laird of Boisdale has tried wheat with success, and his knowledge in farming makes the deep moss carry a sward equal to any loamy foil. The sea-ware has commonly the effect of making the deepest and coldest moss keep a firm sward, even when applied by men whose judgment in farming is by no means of the first rate.

The cattle of every kind descend from the hills to feed on the sea-ware in Winter; and after they have filled their bellies, they return to the heath to mix that dry substance with the grass and heath, to qualify each other. The inhabitants must be very careful of their goats, which, when neglected, are often drowned on the little rocks by the tide, as they are bad swimmers. Instinct leads them down as well as the other cattle, when the ebb begins; yet they have not the same sagacity to retire in time.

The

The little old Scotch plough is quite simple, and has a sock and coulter, with two handles almost like the English plough, drawn by four little horses; but so weak, that another kind of a simpler plough, called the *rustle*, with a crooked iron resembling a hook, passing through a stick of four feet long, and drawn by one horse, cuts the furrow before that drawn by four horses, to make it easy for that plough. *Cromman-gadd* is a simpler plough than the old Scotch, and drawn by two or more little horses. It has only one handle, and the ploughman goes with his left side foremost. The *cafs ehrom* is a kind of plough somewhat like a spade, that is only driven by men's feet. The head of this plough is four feet long, with an iron sock, and with a handle of six feet long, that is fastened in the head with a peg for the man's foot to push it under the furrow, which is turned as well as with the other plough. Before this the *rustle* must cut also. The *cafs direach*, or straight spade, is commonly used for cutting the turf on the top, or trenching, which a woman or man lifts and places it on the ridges, above the sea-ware. This is called, in their language, *taomadh*,

When

When they want, by cutting out of the middle of the ridge, to spread it toward the sides, they call it *taomadb a broin*. This last operation is necessary when the crown of the ridge becomes too sharp, in order to make it flat. When the corn is sown on the ridge they harrow it, (one harrow, drawn by a rope or thong, is fastened to the tail of the horse) but very frequently it is only raked.

The potatoes are planted in beds, by placing the seed above the dung or sea-ware, and covering them, as already observed, out of the furrows, by the hands of a woman or man, as they do when the *taomadb* for the barley is made as already mentioned, or by a dibble, in case the *taomadb* has been made some time before, and the holes filled with the rakes.

They never reap their barley, but pluck it by the root; and after it is stacked, and fit to be dried, they cut off the roots for thatch. But the oats are cut with sickles, and the grass carefully shaken out of every handful, lest the sheaf should be long a drying.

The

The grafs for hay is commonly cut with sickles, from the left to the right, contrary to the manner of cutting corn in England, and the southern and inland parts of Scotland.

The crop is carried on the backs of horses, where they can be used, and upon the backs of men and women, where the horses cannot work. Their stacks are built mostly conical, every row being bound fast with heather ropes from the bottom to the top, and they are covered with no thatch through the Winter,

Their flail consists of a hand-staff and a short thick supple, either of wood, or tangle, bound to the staff by a thong, six inches distant. With this implement dangling round their right arm, they thrash the oats and barley.° They never swing the flail round their head; nor stand upright at this work. The women are generally employed at thrashing, especially among the poorer farmers, while the men are at the master's work, or some where else usefully employed. The straw is carried to the fields for gentlemen's cattle, who are seldom housed, but fed in good Winter grazing, (called *geary geambry*), and

and those are much stronger and bigger than the poor tenants' cows, which must be housed, as they have no Winter grass on the fields for them. And the prices of each are vastly different, as the gentleman will sell a cow at four guineas, while the poor man will be glad of the half, and seldom draws so much from the drovers.

The Winters are seldom so severe in those islands as on the continent of Scotland. The snow lies but a short time, and not very deep. On that account their cows are able to stand the Winter. Their yearlings must be housed, and fed with hay or straw, in the same manner as the poor men's cattle are, being as yet not hardy enough to stand the Winter blasts.

Their kilns are but small; nor do they spread the barley on the surface above the straw to be dried. They cut the heads of the barley, and lay them in order upon the bare ribs. When they are dried, they are hauled down on the floor, and immediately thrashed, and winnowed, and clapt up hot in plates, ready for the quern. So that a
man

man can cut the sheafs dry, and thrash the barley, clean it for the quern, and make his breakfast thereof after it is ground.

The tenants make sieves of sheep-skins, and sift the meal on plates made of grass, or on large goat-skins placed on the floors. This is done evening and morning, when they quern as much grain as their diets require.

Horses and cows were formerly the staple trade of these isles, and they have raised the prices of both wonderfully of late from what they were formerly. Now kelp has taken the precedence; an article some years past unknown over all these countries. And no country whatever can vie with them in the quantity and quality of that kind of commodity, particularly over Lewis, the southern isles of Harris and Uists. So that in proportion to its extent, no country in Europe can equal it in point of riches, which are yearly drawn from the vast droves of cows, horses, sheep, and goats, that are exported, besides the much larger store of wealth which the kelp and crops raise. These
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commodities are increasing both in value and in quantity ; for the kelp grows thicker by cutting it oftener.

This ware is cut with sickles every third year, for kelp, and the immense quantity of cast ware, or tangle, which hurls daily on the shores for the same use, bring very rich returns from the markets to the owners yearly. We observed already, that this ware is immediately carried from the sea to spread on the fields to dry, either on the backs of horses, or of women.

The kelp kilns are from eight to twelve feet long, and three feet broad. After one floor full is burnt of the kelp, or ware, two men work the red-hot liquid with irons made for the purpose, until it becomes hard ; and then they burn another stratum above, and the same operation is gone through, until that also is hardened into a solid body, and so on from one stratum to another. And then it is well covered with turfs, to keep out the rain, until a vessel arrive to carry it to the markets.

This

This is the hardest labour which the people have throughout the year, and at the time they are worst fed; because their own potatoes, or little grain, are, by this time, mostly consumed. The oat-meal, by them called the white meal, or *min bhan*, by way of distinction from the graddan meal, which is blackened by the smoke and ashes of the straw, being purchased, is very sparingly dealt among the people, that if possible, they may not eat more of it than the price given them for making each tun of kelp can afford: and thus, instead of paying part of their rents with their Summer's labour, they may sink deeper into their master's debt.

Lord Macdonald deals on very liberal principles with his kelp-makers. They are well fed, and therefore can save a part of their gain; but such as have run in arrears with the tacksmen, are miserably ill off. They are obliged to straiten their belts very considerably; and in these times hunger is written in legible characters in the face of the wretched labourer.

This

The nature of this work requires their attendance by night and by day, frequently, in some of the remote little isles, where even the slender assistance of their poor families cannot reach them with (*wilks*) periwinkles, or any kind of shell-fish. Such poor men as these can hardly afford to keep a milch-cow: some of them have two ewes, bound together by a rope called *caiggean chaorich*, to give a little milk for the poor starved children at home; but of this luxury the father of the family cannot then partake; and they are frequently obliged to kill these milch-ewes for their food, when their families are at the point of starving.

When the cuddies, or other fish, happen to be on the coast, those poor men make a kind of livelihood; but when they are not, their case is deplorable---one while at the kelp, and immediately thereafter running to the shore for wilks, oysters, clammy fish, *crechan shell-fish*, or any that can be eat, to quiet a hungry stomach. The meagre looks and feeble bodies of these belaboured creatures, without the necessary hours for sleep, and

and all over in dirty ragged clothes, would melt any but a tyrant into compassion. Yet if any quantity of their set compliment of kelp remains unfinished, the deficiency must be accumulated to their former debts, to make up the pretended loss of the cruel man.

It is truly mortifying to find a people naturally industrious, altogether crushed. The poor women are at the querns, or baking cakes, long before day-light, and all the while singing with surprising spirits.

When they are making peats, five people are employed. One cuts the peat; another places it on the brink of the ditch where it is dug; a third spreads it on the field; a fourth pairs and cleans the moss; and a fifth is resting, and ready to relieve the man that cuts. And thus the round is taken by turns. The women are seldom at this work, but the men help one another alternately; sometimes they must rest satisfied with fewer hands; but the above is the full compliment required to perform the work, according to their taste.

They take the corn to the open fields to winnow ; because their little barns, if they have any, have no back doors to open, to let in the winds. The better sort have small doors within their barns, to receive the wind from the different quarters ; still, however, the fields are mostly used.

CHAP. VII.

*Of Marriages, Baptism, and Burials ; with
the several singular Ceremonies and Usages.*

MARRIAGES among the gentlemen are attended with no greater pomp than among the better sort through Great Britain ; they are commonly attended by their friends, who make merry on the happy occasion. Contracts are only known to few. But it is not so with the common people. They invite the friends on both sides, to make up the contract of marriage ; and as all the poor people retain that part of their former importance that entitled them to the honour of gentleman (*duinne uafle*), at least in words, it is supposed that the lady's parents will not make a trifling offer of portion to their intended son-in-law. A pompous promise, if they fail in the performance adds much

to the dignity of the match. Being present at one of these meetings of friends, I observed that the friends of the young man began with a set speech, by informing the parents of the cause and design of their meeting, which was, to pave the way for an alliance with the family to which the woman belonged; and then launched out at considerable length on the great and good qualities of the young man who aspired at the connection. Meanwhile, they remarked, that the friends of the gentleman were such as ought not to be received with indifference. It ought, they proceeded, to be esteemed a very happy turn of Providence to cast such a hopeful youth and good friends to back him, to solicit their friendship. They hoped, therefore, they would make an offer of such a portion to the young woman, as might do honour to themselves, and worthy of so promising a young man.

The portion formerly was paid in cows, sheep, and goats, these being more valuable to them than money; and this old practice is continued in full force. Even if the parents should have none, they must name a
number

number of cows, and a handsome number too, otherwise the young man would think his dignity suffered in the eyes of the neighbours. Twenty cows are among the most moderate portions promised, and many of them considerably above that number. If the young couple had reason to be satisfied with each other during the courtship, the affair is generally settled to the satisfaction of the parties, after which they begin to make merry. They eat, drink, dance, and sing, &c. &c.

But as their cows are but few, they must take, at the time of payment, a kind of representative value of it. Accordingly I was told that a year old cow stood for one; three ewes for another; a spinning wheel for a third; two blankets for a fourth; a small chest for a fifth; and so on until the number agreed upon was completed.

On the Saturday evening after the contract is settled, their names must be given to the parish clerk to have the banns published in the church the following day. This piece of ceremony they are truly averse to, as

private marriage is more eligible, and they wish much not to have their names called. They pretend to be ashamed on these occasions : but I believe the true cause is the fear of alarming others of the sweet-hearts, who might step forward to claim a *prior* right, and perhaps occupancy. I myself have seen the proceedings stopped by the opposite party, while the publication of the banns was going forward.

However, when there is no interruption made, they appear before the clergyman, when the ceremony is regularly performed. After the ceremony is finished, the parson calls to the bridegroom to remember his duty to the bride ; and as an earnest of obedience to his reverence, the swain gives her a hearty kiss. A very rough scramble follows among the other men, who try which will have the good fortune of getting the next kiss from the blushing bride : after which she is led home in triumph, with a large bag-pipe playing some chearful march, and other tunes composed for the purpose.

One would naturally wonder that women of easy virtue, as we before described, should not find it difficult to meet with helpmates : yet so it is, that many instances can be produced, when the men strive to get their favourite in spite of what may be alledged against her virtue.

They make large weddings, and they frequently spend more money than their promised portion on the occasion ; though they should want in the after part of life. It is customary for both the bride and bridegroom, just before their marriage ceremony, to untie their shoes, garters, and some other bandage, to prevent witchcraft, of which they are much afraid on these occasions, and think this an antidote against it.

In many parts of Scotland a practice prevails, which not only lessens the expence of the weddings, but even makes them so profitable as to enrich the young couple. That is what is called *penny-weddings*, at which the bridegroom prepares a feast, and invites the whole country. Every man, and every woman,

man, pays a shilling, which, voracious as they may be, is twice as much as the value of what they eat. The men drink four or five shillings a-piece, so that (to such poor people) a great sum is collected. These penny weddings, and all promiscuous meetings, it is said, contribute much to population.

Their baptisms are accompanied with ceremonies that are innocent and useful, for cementing the peace of the country; more especially among themselves. Baptism is administered either in public or in private;---just as it suits the conveniency of themselves and their minister. After this the parents present the child to some neighbour, and call him *gosti*; or god-father; and after kissing and blessing the child, the *gosti* delivers the infant to the mother, and ever afterwards looks upon himself as bound not only to be careful of that infant, but also very much attached to the parents. They call one another *gosties* during life. This name becomes more familiar to them than their own Christian names.

Nay,

Nay, if they had formerly been at variance, by this simple union they become reconciled to one another. They never come to the minister, without a bottle of spirits, and are commonly merry on the occasion.

Burials are preceded by the large bag-pipe, playing some mournful dirge. They continue playing till they arrive at the place of interment, while the women sing the praises of the dead, clasping the coffins in their arms, and lie on the graves of their departed friends. It is common to see women coming out to stand by the way-side, who are strangers, as the corpse is carried along, with certain mournful ditties in their mouths, and making great lamentations; while they in the mean time ask some of the attendants where the corpse came from, and whether they are men or women.

On those occasions, there is great profusion of meat and drink brought to the place of interment, where the expences generally bear a proportion to the rank and fortune of the person deceased, to prevent the imputation of meanness; and they seldom separate
while

while the cask contains any spirits to wash down their sorrow: which seldom happens before their griefs are converted into squabbles, and broken heads, which some of them carry home as marks of remembrance for their lost friends.

They seldom display much mirth at late * wakes, as they do in many parts of Scotland; but sit down with great composure, and rehearse the good qualities of their departed friend or neighbour. Their grief soon subsides after they are buried; and many have speedily replaced a lost wife by some of their former acquaintance. ,

* In many parts of Scotland it is customary for the youth of both sexes to sit up by the corpse, and console themselves by whisky and other pastimes.

CHAP. VIII.

*Oppressive Customs----Tenants fostering their
Master's Children without Board Wages---
Begging of Cows, Sheep, and Goats, after
Marriage---Begging of Wool---Begging of
Cocks---Anecdotes.*

THE tacksmen send their children to be fostered among their vassals. There are several pernicious customs that prevail among the better sort of tacksmen, to distress the poor tenants, unknown in other countries. By such infamous means, they become at once possessed of no inconsiderable share of the wealth of the poor inhabitants.

The moment that the child of a great tacksmen is nursed, the most substantial of the subtenants is pitched upon as the most proper person to foster the child. And this the
tenant

tenant must look on as a piece of great condescension in the master; and no inconsiderable mark of honour and respect done to himself, to be thus entrusted with so precious a charge. And from the moment the child is conducted to his house by a servant, he is dignified with the appellation of *eddigh*, and his wife with that of *muimmé*: a step-father, and step-mother.

By this distinguished character, each are addressed thereafter. The child never speaks to them but by that venerable name; nor they in return, but by the title of child. And this child is not only well fed and clothed by the *muimmé*, but she also must attend the *daultidh*, with more care and attention than any of her own, that the parents, of any of them, may have no reason to complain that their child is neglected in meat, clothing, or cleanliness.

By the time that this *daultidh*, or step-child, is ten or twelve years old, and generally well fostered, the parents carry him or her home, to send them to their education: and instead of paying any board wages for
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all this expence of meat and drink, constant attendance, and clothes, for the child, it will be all lost labour, unless their *daultidh* is accompanied home with a present of cows, sheep, or goats, and clothes, in proportion to their respective abilities.

And the foster-father and mother are always more or less respected by the true parents, in proportion as they continue to load their step-child with presents. The moment they fail in that part of their duty, then they are allowed to pass along in the common crowd of beggars, hardly noticed by the step-child or parent.

In this, as well as many other particulars, I am not likely to avoid the imputation of being too severe, or departing from the truth! I must here, therefore, as in former circumstances, be excused by the kind reader for proving my allegations by testimony.

One *Monro*, called *Macandy*, was a rich subtenant, under different great tacksmen; and his wife nursed children for them all; and from his kind attention to his *daultidh*,
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was truly honoured and esteemed, nor, to say truth, is there a more lady-like woman, without disparagement, in all Harris, than his wife was, and still is, for her age.

It is commonly the case in this unfortunate country, that though a man is possessed of several hundreds of sheep in the forest (because in this place they are not restricted by their masters from multiplying their flocks) when he begins to fail in strength, he is in a short time stripped of his property, and becomes a beggar.

But this was not the whole of the case with Macandy; for he had not only great flocks of sheep roaming through the hills, but a vast herd of cows, and a good farm, with money at interest in his master's hand, whose benefit it was to continue so wealthy a tenant in one place unmolested. Besides, he also fostered the present tacksmen (who is now a full Captain in the Army) which ought to entitle him to double care and attention in his old age, from his foster-son. This man also is in possession of the money

that the foster-father was possessed of, as successor to his father.

What, then, was the consequence of so much expence and tender care? Why the foster-son left the foster-father and mother, both blind with age, being one hundred years old, without a lease, and at the mercy of a steel-bowman that hardly has an equal for severity; who made old blind Macandy and his blind wife pay equally dear for leave to sit and lie in a hut, while any of his cows, sheep, or horses remained; as the youngest and stoutest of his scallags: observing, that though he fostered his brother-in-law, that was nothing to him. Those poor aged blind people at length were reduced to apply for their money to pay their rents; but as money lent by subtenants to their masters, is seldom returned, Macandy applied for his money in vain: in vain even to the lady to whom he delivered his money, and whose son he fostered, and in whose possession her bill acknowledging the receipt lay. Macandy finding that all his good deeds were thus repaid, gave his bill to his foster-son's agent and relation, being also no inconsiderable

considerable limb of the law, in expectation of receiving payment through his hands, as he is a manager of the rents, as well as a lawyer : but there also he has failed. As it is not intended to pay up the money, excuses are easily invented.

Thus I have seen the aged pair blind, and feeble with age, sitting or lying in their hut, without cow, sheep, or goat, or bread, to support them, but what the charitable poor subtenants sent to their huts, as they are unable to take up their beds on their backs (as other beggars must) to walk about the different bays, to be maintained.

There is a very charitable gentleman in London; who in his younger days remembered to have seen Macandy, not only servant to his father for years, but also a wealthy tenant. This gentleman, from compassion, ordered a certain quantity of meal to be given them yearly, after he heard of their distressed circumstances, and has also applied for the bill, that he might make the money be forthcoming : but as he is in earnest determined to force them to give up the money

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so justly due; others are as much in earnest to defeat his intentions, and therefore he will never come at the said deed.

One Macdonald, *Callum M'Innish*, a more respectable character still than old Monro, who fostered another son to this singular family, fared worse still; for, along with fostering the child, they sent their servants to work in his neighbourhood, and because he refused to feed them with the milk of his own cattle, he was instantly obliged to betake himself to the King's forest with his family and cattle, and even to carry their own son with him to this asylum, and to keep him for years thereafter, even though he never returned back to their lands more: nay, after the boy was at Stornaway town, at school, where he died, Malcolm was sent for, and had to hire men and a boat out of his own pockets, to carry the corpse to Roudle to be buried, a space of fifty-six miles, in a severe storm, in Winter; while the parents only took the trouble of meeting the corpse of their own child, as others of the neighbours, after the poor man was at all this expence and trouble.

This is another instance, and only one of the many peculiar to this famous family, of parental affection for their children; and also points out their power, like the Centurion; "They are men in authority, and can say to one man, go, and he goeth; to another, do this, and he obeys it." Nay, one Ruaridh Macilphadrack, who was once richer than both the former put together, and fostered many of those children, yet is now not only a common beggar, but unfortunately deranged in his faculties, and cannot finger one shilling of the sums of money he lodged in the hands of a tackf-man, whose word he depended upon without a bill. And though he says, that the son knows of this, and knew the confidence he placed in the father's honour, still he refuses to pay a farthing, because he had not secured a bill. It is in vain for the aged man to reply, that bills were not necessary in those days, when a man's word was deemed sufficient; but times are altered.

This shameful practice is too common to be refuted; and, if it was attempted, the men are still living testimonies of the facts:
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however surprising the narrative may appear to people of more free and liberal sentiments.

Another shameful practice commonly exercised to fleece the poor in this country, is the mode of going round the whole tenants over the parish to beg for cows, sheep, and goats, after marriage, under pretence of stocking a farm.

The moment a gentleman, in possession of a farm fully stocked, with all its complement of cattle, thinks of marrying a woman, whether his fancy lights on the daughter of a rich or poor man, a stranger or native, be he old or young, rich or poor, himself, the new married woman loses no time to go the round, accompanied by the man and maid-servant, to try her fortune among the wretched tenants, under pretence of stocking the farm.

It is expected, on those occasions, that every one will deal liberally to the kind lady that did them the honour of standing under their roof. Immediately a runner

must be dispatched for a sheep or more, as their respective circumstances are supposed to admit of, that *bean-n'tighe*, the good wife, may be presented with them to stock the farm she is entering upon.

Each of these strives who shall receive most, as by this mark of attention a proof is given of their esteem to herself, and as it points out the rank that the family she belongs to holds in the eye of the common people. And should any sturdy stubborn man prove churlish on those important occasions, he might have occasion to repent of his refusal; and therefore when hardly (*a caigean*) two sheep for giving milk to their children remain, yet they are cautious of refusing *bean-n'tighe*.

Thus every new *beann*, or good wife, like a new broom, sweeps almost clean before her, and leaving behind only a house full of ragged hungry children crying for meat, with the mother and father to divert them.

I am aware, that it may be observed, that it is not peculiar to the Western Isles, for
persons

persons to go about their neighbours, to procure additional stock to their farms. In various parts of Scotland, young beginners make a circuit through the country, soliciting donations of corn, potatoes, hay, and straw. That practice, which is called *thigging*, is very different from the one which we are describing. The former makes the humble supplication of poverty, the latter the exaction of arbitrary power. Here, indeed, as elsewhere, the poor are obliged to solicit charitable contributions of corn, potatoes, and other articles of subsistence. The tenants themselves, experienced in distress, are prone to succour the miserable.

But those poor people, who are liberal to the rich, must be extremely cautious how they venture to pray them for assistance. Some of the rich make it a rule to grant no relief; but to dismiss from their gates unhappy persons who owe their abject state to their oppression.

The young are easily initiated in the principles of rapacity and tyranny, which so uniformly regulate the conduct of their parents.

In the beginning of Spring, the young gentlemen go about among the tenants to collect their cocks and hens. As the parents extort their quadrupeds from these oppressed people; so do the children the bipeds. They carry their servants with them, and force the tenants to part with great numbers. They pretend that they want them for fighting; but in reality convert them into money; and often sell them to their owners themselves. Should any subtenant refuse to give his fowls, or an equivalent, the parents will find means to make him regret his resistance to the insolent exactions of youthful tyranny. Perhaps, the young despot himself would, on the spot, inflict punishment on the audacious rebel, who should have the presumption to maintain his own rights.

Thus fleeced by the extortions of their superiors, the poor people are moreover exposed to the importunate solicitations, and demands of their equals, from the neighbouring isles. Swarms of the wives tenants of Uist, and the small isles, come in Summer to the hills of Harris to sponge on the poor inhabitants, to get presents of

wool and clothing. Each of those begging females must have a servant to carry the bags of wool which she collects. A dozen of them is often quartered on a poor tenant in a night. One of the family, the next day, accompanies them to a neighbouring farm, *monstrator et comes hospitibus*. The strangers carry their distaffs and spindles along with them, and spin as they proceed, and when they sit down to rest. As they are engaged in their own work, and are fed by others, they make their circuit at their leisure. The expence of those visitors, added to the rapacity of the tacksmen, compels the poor tenants to be half naked, and half starved, even in the coldest weather; and when engaged at the hard labour before described.

It will naturally occur to the reader, that the gifts to the mendicant females are voluntary, and consequently not grievous. In fact, though nominally voluntary, they are really compulsory. The mendicants, have easier access to their landlords and landladies, frighten them with threats of complaints. They even come often re-

inforced by the recommendations of the tacksmen's wives, or ladies, (as they stile themselves) which the tenants dare not disregard. Here, indeed, as in all countries where arbitrary power prevails, oppressive as the supreme despot may be, a great part of the suffering of the subjects arises from subordinate tyranny.

I have heard the practices of proprietors in former ages adduced as a precedent for burdening the tenants with the maintenance of their children, and expecting from them presents of cattle with them when they returned to their parents. Such a practice, indeed, prevailed. The favourite vassals being of entrusted with the heir, and other children of the chieftain, always strengthens their attachment to the interest of the family. But the conduct of the chieftains in former times, and of the tacksmen in the present, was very different. The proprietor protected the benefactors of his children, and gave them long leases, and additional farms, and did every thing in his power to promote their advantage. Benefits conferred on the generous gentleman exacted gratitude, and procured friend-

friendship and patronage. Presents conferred on illiberal avaricious tacksmen, only increase rapacity and cruelty. Where generosity ought to prevail, not even justice takes place. Instead of gratitude, come insolence, injustice, and barbarity.

CHAP. VIII.

Anecdotes of Prince William Henry—Of the Town of Stornaway, in Lewis---Contrast between the Dawnings of Liberty and Comfort opened in Lewis, and the present State of the adjacent Island of Harris---Former Manners and Mode of Life in the Hebrides compared with the present.---A Comparison of the Condition of the Hebrideans, and other Highland Scallags with that of the Negroes in the West-Indies---Observations on the Attempts to introduce extensive Fisheries into the Islands and Highlands of Scotland.

FROM scenes of oppression and sorrow let us now turn our eyes to the dawns of liberty and comfort introduced into that portion of the Western Hebrides, that has fortunately fallen into the possession of the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie of Seaforth; whose
genius

genius and pursuits may be considered as characteristical, in some measure, of the present age, when the false glitter of barbarian war begins to give way before the real splendour of humane philosophy: a noble and elevated mind, instead of pursuing military renown under the banners of some unjust and ambitious conqueror, employing his time and talents in the acquisition of knowledge, and the application of knowledge to the useful arts, and the increase of human happiness. This modern ULYSSES, instead of wandering from his ITHACA, like a neighbour of his, in order to acquire fortune and fame by arms, in distant countries, remains at home, the guide and the father of his people.

The chief town in Lewis is Stornaway. It is with equal commodiousness and elegance laid out in regular buildings and streets. The merchants have built excellent peers and quays, for loading and unloading vessels, of which there is a great resort. The bay in which it is situated, is safe, and the harbour spacious and easy of access; with
excellent

excellent ground for anchoring. Here is excellent accommodation, and good entertainment, at moderate rates, for strangers, in public houses and coffee-rooms. The private houses of the merchants and tradesmen display neatness, plenty, and a kind, as well as elegant hospitality; being plentifully supplied, by means of their home and foreign markets, with all the necessaries, and even luxuries of life. Stornaway, separated by its situation, from the main land of Scotland, but approximated to various commercial towns, by easy water-carriage, is not confined to the Celtic customs that prevail in the Highlands and Islands in general, but readily adopts the modes of the capital, and the improvements of every country.

This town, a few years ago, was honoured with a visit by Prince William Henry, when he made a voyage and tour through the Hebrides. Travellers, with very few exceptions, never think of voyaging through the Western Hebrides, or touching on the Long Island; but pass on by Skye, Mull, Tyree, Iona, and Coll. Prince William took
a wider,

a wider range. And as the Prince performed a more extensive voyage in those parts, than our common travelling antiquarians, and botanists; so he was more curious and minute; and perhaps, more judicious in his enquiries, which did not so much relate to insects, shells, feathers, and druidical remains, and those *lusus naturæ*, those whirligigs of Nature, that so much attracted the attention of a certain Welsh traveller, as to the civil and political state of society; the domestic situation of the people; and the state of the useful, or mechanic arts. He conversed with freedom and affability, through an interpreter, with the lower orders of the people, enquiring into their situation, occupations, and manner of life. He condescended, wherever he touched, to carry along with him many pieces of workmanship peculiar to the Isles, and which displayed, though ruder than the handicrafts of manufacturing countries, the contrivance and invention of the natives; and what their genius, with proper cultivation and encouragement, was capable of producing. A very different opinion was formed of those genuine remains of the ancient Celts, than
that

that which is professed by the GOTH, Pinkerton, who thinks that the Highlands of Scotland will never flourish in useful or liberal arts, till the Celts be driven or otherwise removed out of it; who calls them CATTLE, and scarcely allows them to be of the human species. But of this gentleman, and his nostrums and animosities, I shall take an opportunity of saying more in another work of a more comprehensive nature and extent than the present, which I intend, God willing, in the course of a year, perhaps less, to give to the public.

Prince William, whenever he took a fancy to any thing, always made a very princely return, which, with the frank manner that accompanied it, made the hearts of those poor people, so little accustomed to the favours or condescension of their superiors, leap with joy. It is superfluous to say, that the Prince is beloved and adored among a people oppressed by tyranny and custom, yet sensible by nature, and ductile and open to every impression of gratitude. The Prince, as may easily be supposed, was received in Stornaway with the utmost respect, and honoured
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by all possible attentions ; and he was highly satisfied with his reception.

The merchants of Stornaway, among other branches of commerce, deal deeply in the fishing trade. Several of them employ one, two, or more vessels, in the proper season, constantly on the look-out for herrings. Their situation is very happy for fishing, being near to the west side of Lewis, and those lochs and western coasts, which are resorted to by the deep sea herrings much more than the eastern shores either of the main land of Scotland, or of the neighbouring islands. The gains of the adventurers are, *communibus annis*, considerable on the trade ; and they draw a large portion of the royal bounty for the encouragement of the fishery. They also send great quantities of oil, seal-skins, and other skins, annually to the markets. The Stornaway fishers, still farther, have become famous for the vast herds of porpoises which they kill in their lochs, sometimes by hundreds at a time.

Trade, but chiefly the fishing trade, gives birth to a lively fermentation of general industry.

dustry, not only in Stornaway, but in other parts of Lewis ; where the natural activity of the inhabitants is farther encouraged by the wise and liberal policy of Mr. Mackenzie, in constructing roads, and by just regulations, leaving to the industrious the reward of their toil. Stornaway is a market, and is daily becoming a greater market for the produce of the soil, and the fruits of the fold and field. In the town of Stornaway there is a growing demand for houses ; the building of which gives employment to many hands ; as masons, carpenters, smiths, day-labourers, &c. and people to cut, dry, and bring home peats, of which the consumption is daily increasing. Such a lively little town cannot but be a source of satisfaction and pleasure, as well as of advantage to the lord superior of whom the inhabitants hold their tenements, who is an eye witness of their industry, and ever ready to encourage the introduction of whatever may tend to the general improvement. How happy a change has been brought about in the island of Lewis since the reign of James VI. of Scotland and First of England, a period of less than two centuries ! That Prince, who
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was a great encourager of all the arts of peace, sent a colony of industrious fishermen from the shire of Fife, in Scotland, with several Danes and Dutchmen, to teach and to exhibit an example of useful industry to the natives, with the encouragement of large allotments of bays, and lands indisputably in the gift of the Crown. The heir to Macleod, the then chieftan of Lewis, together with his neighbours, fell upon the unfortunate strangers from the low-lands, and massacred them to the number of many hundreds in one night. The present chieftain of Lewis seems studious to expiate the barbarism of his predecessors.

A very different face of affairs from that which we have just been contemplating in Lewis, takes place in the neighbouring island, or rather peninsula of Harris, and for the most parts in all places in the Hebrides, where the people are not under the eye of some great and liberal lord, whose mind and fortune conspire to nourish liberal ideas in his breast, and to diffuse comfort all around him. On a general survey of the western Hebrides, as we have seen, the picture that is
N oftenest

oftenest presented, and which recurs again and again to the mind, is that of melancholy and depression. Those isles are, in general, the melancholy abodes of woe, of suffering in various forms, where the people are treated merely as beasts of burthen, and worse than beasts of burthen. If want and stripes leave any room for sensibility to a state of slavish dependence and cruel revilings and mockery, surely the tears, the cries, the groans, of so great a number of oppressed, though lively and acute people, call for pity and relief at the hands of Government !

The public attention has of late years been called to the situation of the African cultivators of the soil in the West-Indies. God forbid that I should insinuate a disapprobation of any mode of conduct, whose object is mercy. Let me, however, observe, that there are certain divisions, classes, and tribes of men, that have a claim to our sympathy and aid, in preference to others ; both by the laws of natural, and those of revealed religion : and, having made this observation, let me institute a comparison
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of the African in the West-Indies with that of the Celtic slave or scallag in the Western Hebrides, in the neighbourhood of Luskintire in particular.

First, then, with regard to the respective conditions of their life, in general, it is none of their own chusing. The African, when he is not sold on account of some crime, is bereft of his freedom, and forced into slavery by fraud or violence. The Hebridean slave is neither, indeed, trepanned into slavery by guile, nor compelled by physical compulsion; but he is drawn into it by a moral necessity, equally invincible; by a train of circumstances which are beyond his power to control; and leave him no option, but either to serve some master as a scallag, or often to protract a miserable existence for some time, in the forest, and near the uninhabited sea-shores, where he may pick up some shell-fish, to perish, with his wife, perhaps, and little ones, through cold and hunger.

Second. With regard to labour. The negroe works only from six o'clock in the morning to six in the evening: and out of that time he has two complete hours for rest

and refreshment. The scallag is at work from four o'clock in the morning to eight, nine, and sometimes ten in the evening.

Third. With regard to respite from labour. The negroe is allowed only one day in the week for himself. And this, too, is the portion of time allowed to the scallag.

Fourth. With regard to food. The negroe has a plentiful allowance of such common fare as is sufficient to nourish them; besides his little property in land, or *peculium*, which he cultivates for himself, on the evenings, after he is done his master's work; and on Sundays, and other holidays. The scallag is fed only twice a day, when at hard labour for his master, with water-gruel, or as they call it, *brochan*; or kail, or coleworts; with the addition of a barley cake; or potatoes: and all this without salt. But, for his family, and for himself, on Sundays, or unable to work through bodily indisposition, he has no other means of subsistence than what he can raise for himself by the labour of one day out of seven, from

from a scanty portion of cold and moorish soil :---Barley, potatoes, coleworts, and a milch cow, or a couple of ewes, perhaps, for giving milk to his infants : though it often happens that he is obliged to kill these household gods, as it were, in order to prevent his family from starving. At certain seasons, he has fish in abundance ; but this he is, for the most part, obliged to eat without bread, and often without salt. The negroe, if he be tolerably industrious, can afford, on Saturdays, and other holidays, with pepper-pot, a pig, or a turkey, and a can of grog. Nay, many a negroe, I am well assured, has been known to clear, besides many comforts for his own family, by the produce of his little property, from twenty to thirty, and even forty pounds a year : so that there is a fair probability, that any negroe would soon be enabled to gain the price of his liberty, if he desired and deserved it. As relief from bondage, and woe, the scallag has not a single ray of hope on this side of the grave.

Fifth. With regard to lodging and clothing. The negroe is comfortably lodged and

fed in a warm climate : the scallag is very poorly clothed, and still more wretchedly lodged, in a cold one. And, as the negroe is provided by his master with bedding and body clothes, so he is also furnished by him with the implements of husbandry. The scallag, with sticks and fods, rears his own hut ; procures for himself a few rags, either by what little flax or wool he can raise ; or by the refuse or coarser parts of these articles furnished by his master : and provides his own working tools, as the spade, called *cafs dircach*, the *cafs chrom*, &c.

Sixth. With regard to usage or treatment. The slave is driven on to labour by stripes, so also is the scallag ; who is even, as we have seen, formally tied up, on some occasions, as well as the negroe, to a stake, and scourged on his bare back. The owner of the slave, it may farther be observed, has a strong interest in his welfare : for if he should become sick, or infirm, he must maintain him ; or if he should die, he must supply his place at a considerable expence. There is no such restraint on the peevish humours, or angry passions of a Hebridean laird

laird or tacksmán. The scallag, under infirmity, disease, and old age, is set adrift on the wide world, and begs from door to door, and from island to island. Nor is it necessary, in order to supply the place of a scallag, to be at any expence : for the frequent failure of subtenants affords but too many recruits to the wretched order of scallags.

Seventhly, and lastly. As there is nothing so natural as the love of liberty, and an aversion to restraint and oppression, the scallag, as well as the negroe, sometimes attempts emancipation, by fleeing to the uninhabited parts of the country : though such attempts are not so often made by the scallags after they are enured to slavery, as when they feel themselves on the verge of sinking into that dreadful and deserted condition of existence.

The only asylum for the distressed in the Long Island is the King's forest : where several are sheltered with their families and cattle for the Summer season ; where they live in caves and dens of the earth ; and subsist, without fire, on milk, the roots of

the earth, and shell-fish. But in the Winter season, cold and famine drive them back again to seek for subsistence and shelter under the same tyranny that had driven them to the forest. The blue, and other mountains, afford the means of life to runaway negroes (if they can escape the searches of their masters) both Summer and Winter.

In the West-Indies, no planter, or captain of a vessel, is allowed, by the law of the Colonies, to kidnap, conceal, or keep any runaway slave, or, by any means, to detain him from his master. Here, also, the comparison holds between the slave and the scallag. There is not a tacksmen who will take or retain in his service, or on his land, either the scallag or subtenant of another master, without a written certificate from that master, that the scallag or subtenant has a good character; and also, if he be otherwise satisfied as to the character of the poor man, that his master is willing to part with him. For as the colonists, by their laws, so the tacksmen of the Western Hebrides, by their country regulations, have
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entered into a firm compact, that no one will harbour the subtenant or scallag of another, who does not produce a proof of his humble and unlimited obedience to his former master. Now, it is evident, from reason, were it not proved by experience, that certificates are most withheld where they are most wanted. For, no landlord who is known to be cruel to his people, will ever give them certificates; because in that case they would all leave the tyrant, and seek for milder treatment under some less severe master. Certificates of good behaviour are very naturally required with servants: but neither is it possible, for all masters and mistresses to combine in a system for enslaving poor servants; nor in England, does the humanity of the law leave the poor without redress if they did: for, by the late excellent law, respecting masters and servants, the latter can claim a certificate, if the former cannot shew just cause for refusing it.

As I had not entered into the tyrannical combination among the tacksmen, I ventured to engage in my service a young man, of whose good behaviour I was well ascertained,

tained, but who had not a certificate from his former master. But I was soon obliged to give him up. His poor parents were subtenants to that master : who quickly conceived the idea of using them as hostages for the humble return of their son. Those poor people were informed, without ceremony, that if he did not immediately return to his labour, they would be sharply looked after, to teach themselves and their children better manners in future. Accordingly I parted with him.

I am told that there have been many instances of a cunning clever slave having found ways and means to get quit of his master, not only by fleeing into the back or hilly country, but through the contrivance of some charitable sailor, who has concealed him under the hatches, until he escaped out of the island, and so regained his liberty.

There are instances too, of poor men, by similar methods, making their escape from Harris, and other parts of the Long Island. I have known young fellows, who had imprudently married before they were well able

to build a hut for themselves; and of their going, from a terror of falling at that early period of life into the condition of scallags, on board some fishing vessel, on pretence of lending a hand for a few months in fishing, and taking the first opportunity of making their escape at Greenock, Port Glasgow, or any other port where the vessel put into: thus leaving their families to the mercy of their masters.

An old but active man, whom I knew, Evan Macleish, a subtenant to the minister of Harris's father-in-law, by bribing a sailor, made his escape with a concubine and her three children, (whom he had kept for years under the same roof with his lawful wife) below the hatches, unknown to the captain of the vessel, safely to Greenock.

One would imagine that Macleish, who had been so long indulged by his master in living on his ground according to his own taste, might have trusted to him for continued friendship. But notwithstanding this spiritual indulgence, he had but little hope that the minister would shew him any forbearance

bearance in temporal concerns. For seeing that, sooner or later, all that he had must become the property of his master, and he himself a scallag, chose to transport himself with his concubine, and her brood, while he had the means: leaving his old wife behind him as a legacy to the minister and the parish of Harris.

It has been recorded by different writers, that among the Norman pirates, there were many who had never slept, for a course of several years, in any house where there was smoke: and, not very far back, one Reginaldus, of Roman descent, a great chieftain of the Hebrides, lived in the same manner; accustoming himself to all manner of hardships.

It is also reported of one Bredan More *Na-b'Uaii*, supposed to have been the father of the Macdonalds, when he made an irruption from the Hebrides into any part of the main land of Scotland, commonly lodged with a thousand men, in a large cave, in a rock, called, in the Gâlic language, *Uaii Bbridean*:

Bbridean: and that those hardy islanders lived on venison, fish, milk, whey, and the roots of the earth ; with very little use of fire.

So natural is the love of liberty, that I verily believe, what I have been assured of by many a poor Hebridean, with tears in his eyes, that thousands would prefer the same kind of hardy and wild, but independent state, to the condition of scallags and oppressed subtenants, were it permitted to them. Yes, they would willingly live on fish, and vegetables, with a little sea-water, perhaps, condensed, and rendered more salt, by means of evaporation, even without potatoes ; provided they were allowed to shelter in some hut raised by their own hands, near the sea-side ; but this privilege they are not allowed, unless, together with the spot for building a hut on it, and a garden for vegetables, they also take a piece of mossy ground along with it, that may effectually by the tenure of holding it, in fact subject their persons, and all they have, to the will of the landlord.

No human condition is absolutely happy or independent. There is a mixture of misery in every lot : and all men (as is justly observed by a certain respectable writer on the subject of slavery *) are more or less dependent on one another. There is a mutual connection and subordination, that runs through the whole family of mankind, from the sceptre to the spade, from the king on the throne to the peasant attached to the soil." Whether we have respect to former or present times, we shall find that a very great majority of the human race have been, and now actually are, in the state of bondmen and bond-women, to such of their fellow-men as were destined by Providence to move in a higher order in political society. As there are gradations in animal and intellectual nature, so also there are gradations in human society. Such, in reality, is the actual situation of human affairs : such the oeconomy of Providence. And why should there not be divers stations, as well as divers orders of beings ? If it be fit that there
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* William Innes, Esq. of Lime street Square, in the City of London.

should be men as well as angels, why, in like manner, should there not be bondmen, and bond-maidens, as well as princes and princesses, kings and queens? The minds of men are fitted by education and by habit for the different states and stages of society, in which they exist. The advancement of tribes and nations of men from rudeness and ferocity of manners, to civilization and liberty, must be gradual. Sudden transitions from one state to another, like convulsions in the human frame, agitate society, and endanger its existence. It is by a meliorating change in men's minds, not by the operation of sudden and violent laws, that either nations or individuals can pass from vice and barbarism to virtue and refinement. Changes more sudden and decisive would only tend to derange the order in which human affairs naturally proceed; and, by prolonging the reign of confusion, anarchy, discord, and barbarity, to prolong also the misery, together with the excessive inequality of mankind. The truth of all this is emphatically illustrated by what has passed, and is still passing in our day, in Russia.

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The Czarina, willing, on her accession to the Imperial throne of Russia, to raise the peasants attached to the soil to the condition of freemen, inserted in her new code of laws a clause for effecting this object in a very rapid manner. But it was soon found necessary to erase this clause for the peace and safety of the nation. The barbarous Russians, knowing as little bounds between liberty and licentiousness, as between a reasonable sway and despotic rule, abandoned themselves to the most infernal intoxication and excess; and had they not been restrained within their usual folds of fixed custom, would have proceeded, as some of them in fact did, and many of them threatened, to a general massacre of their lords, and universal devastation.

The present Archduke of Russia was induced, from the noblest motives, to manumit all the peasants on one of his estates, by way of experiment, how far he might venture on the same measure in others. The peasants were put in possession of the stocks on the different farms, and thenceforth to pay certain fixed rents for a limited term of years,

years instead of personal service. They were at first infinitely delighted with their new situation.—They reaped the harvest, abandoned themselves to drunkenness, and sold all the produce of the soil, without even leaving seed for another crop. They fell of course into extreme misery, and unanimously joined in a petition to the Archduke, which was readily granted, to be taken under the charge of their former overseers, into their former servile situation !*

I entirely agree in opinion with this gentleman. That there should be different orders or conditions of men, is agreeable to the plan of Providence ; and not superseded by that of grace. *Onesimus* was acknowledged to be the bond-man of *Philemon*, at the same time that he was admitted to a participation of all the privileges and hopes of Christianity. I also readily allow, that in order to the emancipation of slaves, it is necessary,
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* Mr. Innes informs us that these instructive and interesting particulars in the modern history of Russia, are given on the authority of Mr. Swinton, a near relation of the Russian Admiral Greig, who has lately published his *Travels during a course of three years, in Russia, Norway, and Denmark*.

in the first place that they be made capable of being good members of society: that their minds be freed before their bodies. But after they are by education in the Christian Revelation, like the poor *scallags*, humanized, enlightened, and raised to the spiritual conversation, views, and hopes, to keep them in a state of slavery, has in it something that is monstrous and shocking. The Danes, after they had carefully instructed and trained up their negroes, in their West-India settlements, in the principles of morality and the Christian religion, and experienced their good behaviour, generally gave them their liberty, even before the late Danish law for the gradual abolition of slavery, and received, in the increased industry of the well-tutored and free servant, a full recompence for the liberality of their conduct.

There is no law, it is true, authorising slavery in the Hebrides: but the *scallags* are slaves *de facto*, though not *de jure*. I wish, therefore, that something might be done, by the wisdom and humanity of the Legislature, for their relief.

Mr.

Mr. Burke, who seems to think that this world was made only for gratifying the luxurious appetites of a few great ones, observes, with regard to the poor, that they have the consolations of religion. True: yet, it is natural for them to avoid, if they could, hunger, nakedness, and oppressive labour in this life. What, it may be said, can the Legislature do? Shall they make a law, that no laird or tacksmen shall keep a *scallag*? No. This would be as absurd, and cruel, as it would be to enact, that no West-India planter should keep an African slave: in both which cases the poor wretches must starve. But open a field of industry, and let the door of this field be open to every one who chuses to enter.

The natural resource of the maritime and hardy inhabitants of the Western Hebrides, far advanced in the northern and deep seas, is fishing: an occupation to which they are, as we have seen, much addicted. But the lairds and tacksmen, as we have also seen, will not suffer them to settle even in huts on the sea-shore, unless they become, in fact,

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their predial slaves, by taking a piece of cold waste land.

Certain patriotic Scotchmen, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Breadalbane, Mr. George Dempster, and others, moved by these considerations, have set on foot a scheme for introducing liberty, with industry, among the poor Highlanders and Islanders, by setting free some spots of ground from the grasp of tyranny, there raising the standard of liberty, and inviting the industrious to come thither from all quarters as to the abodes of freedom, where they might be secured in the possession of quiet and independent habitations. Certain fishing stations have accordingly been fixed on; where the British Society encourage settlers, by the construction of harbours, roads, warehouses, with necessaries and implements for fishing on reasonable terms, and permanent *domicilia* to them, and theirs after them. All this has a tendency, no doubt, to nourish and stimulate a spirit for fishing. And it is to be regretted, that the fishing stations were not either made more numerous, or more happily chosen. They lie all of them,

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except that in Lewis, or, in the islands adjacent to, the main land of Scotland; where there is neither such plenty, nor large and strong fish, as live in the deep seas, and are occasionally driven into the lochs and bays on the western side of that chain of islands which compose the Western Hebrides, and are known, more commonly, by the name of the Long Island. On that side of the Long Island, the best, beyond all doubt, for fishing stations, there has not so much as one such station been chosen by the British Society; and on the east, in Lewis, only one. It is not every one, indeed--it is but very few of the poor working people in the Long Island, that can afford the expence of transporting themselves and their families, and fixing themselves in the fishing stations in Sky, Loch Broom, Cannay, Rafay, and Oban; but were they only permitted to have a permanent habitation on the shores of the lochs and bays in their neighbourhood, and with which they are acquainted, where shoals of herrings croud annually; and the finest cod, ling, haddocks, whittings, &c. are to be had at all times for the catching, this mere per-

mission would sow the seeds of industry, in the way of fishing, all over those remote isles, more effectually than the greatest bounties, or common conveniencies. There has been, of late, a great deal written against excessive monopolization of land; * and, with much reason. If ever there was a necessity, or propriety in establishing agrarian laws in any part of the British dominions, it is in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; and especially the chain of isles called the Long Island: where the land is, for the most part, locked up from industry, in the hands of tacksmen. Might it not be enacted, that in every large town, or district of a certain extent on the sea-shore, there should be certain spots, or spaces, the most convenient for fishing, marked out, where, if any fisher should chuse to settle, he should have a right do so, on paying a certain small quit-rent to the

* See particularly an "Essay on the Right of Property in Land, with respect to its Foundation in the Law of Nature; its present Establishment by the Municipal Laws of Europe; and the Regulations by which it might be rendered more beneficial to the lower Ranks of mankind." I hope this little book will make its way to the attention of men who have it in their power to take some measures for carrying what is most practicable in that treatise, into execution.

the proprietor? Where cities, villages, or hamlets of refuge might be built, and where, in process of time, the voice of industry, joy, and gladness might be heard, and at last drown the groans and cries of misfortune, smarting under the rod of oppression?

Without the interference of the law, wise proprietors of land, it would seem, should be naturally led to enfranchise such places, here and there on the coasts of the islands, from a reasonable prospect of private advantage.

A noble example of this kind has been given by Mr. Mackenzie of Torridon, who, on a loch of that name, on the western coast of Ross-shire, has taken the most prudent, and I am glad to understand, successful measures for uniting a fishery with a woollen manufactory.

Loch Torridon is situated in 57 degrees and half North latitude. It is about twelve miles in length, and at a medium, two in breadth: though it be here and there indented by promontories of land, advancing

at unequal distances, into the water, and sometimes, joined to the main land only by a narrow isthmus. These irregularities afford advantages to the fishermen, and concur, with rivers, woods, and mountains, to render the natural scenery around Loch Torridon highly romantic and interesting. The margin of the loch is fringed by a strip of arable land of unequal width. The lower parts of the surrounding hills and mountains afford good pasture, where they are not covered with wood: and the summits of the mountains, with the glens and morasses intervening between them, are plentifully stocked with various kinds of game. The rivers that fall into the lake are stocked with salmon and various kinds of trout. In the loch there is the greatest abundance of merchantable fish; and also great quantities of the finest oysters. This inlet of the sea is not only well sheltered and spacious, but it has good holding ground, and is easy of access. Several hundreds of the largest vessels ride with safety, in this natural harbour, in all weathers.

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The natural advantages of this place invited the proprietor, Mr. Mackenzie, to add to these such improvements as might render it one of the most commodious fishing stations that can be desired; and he has made such judicious and liberal arrangements, that men of property, or men of no property, provided they be industrious, and of good morals, may carry on the fishing business, with the greatest prospect of advantage. The enlarged views of Mr. Mackenzie begin to meet with their natural and just reward in an increased industry on his estate, and a resort to Torridon of many poor, but hard-working people. I wish, with all my heart, that this effort of Mr. Mackenzie, for the establishment of industry and comfort in his neighbourhood, may succeed. For one successful example will avail more towards the introduction of useful arts, than the most just reasoning, either in word or writing.

There is a station still more advantageous for fishing than Torridon, that has hitherto been neglected, both by the proprietor and the British Society: although Nature seems to press it on their attention, and imagination

tion itself cannot conceive a more inviting situation for maritime industry or exertion. The place to which I allude, as any one acquainted with the geography of the Hebrides will readily suppose, is the Tarbat: a narrow neck of land, connecting Lewis with Harris, and dividing the eastern from the western seas by a narrow isthmus of six hundred paces. This is to the Hebrides what the Straits of Panama are to America.

CHAP. IX.

*State of Religion in the Western Hebrides---
Presbyteries---Synods---Missionaries---Elders
—School Masters---Catechists.*

IN former times, as is well known, the Western Isles of Scotland, as well as Ireland, to which they were nearly adjacent, were distinguished as the retreats of pious and learned men, and, at one period, the chief seats of sanctity and of learning in Europe. For many years too, after the Reformation, and even so late as the middle of the present century, there was much sincerity and zeal in religious matters among the people in the Hebrides, as well as a strict discipline in the church. The clergy were exemplary in their lives, regular and conscientious in the discharge of their duty. They visited the sick, and spent much time in examining and praying with and for their people: ministerial

rial duties which, at this day, are not so much as named in the Western Hebrides; except indeed among the Catholic clergy, who are very assiduous in the discharge of their religious functions, and therefore much beloved by the people; among whom their influence and authority is every day increasing. A laxity of morals prevails too much in the Established Church, in general, (though there are a few exceptions) as well as of discipline, ministers as well as elders,* being more intent on the acquirement or enjoyment of the good things of this life, than on any spiritual objects. With regard to the great mass of the people, so much of their time is taken up in temporal avocations, in ploughing or digging their arable spots of land, rearing cattle, making kelp, cutting peats, driving cattle for their masters, and other services, that it is not in their power to assemble regularly together, in a fit frame for public worship: not to mention that it is chiefly on the Sundays, after the labour of the preceding

* A kind of lay brethren in the Church of Scotland, mingling, in some measure, the character and functions of the ancient catechists and deacons, with those of English overseers of the poor and churchwardens.

ing week is over, that their masters chuse to send them on errands to distant countries and islands. Poor hard-working people, who, for want of time on the Saturday nights, are obliged to carry home their implements of husbandry from their masters houses to their own cottages, every Sabbath morning, can hardly be supposed to travel fifteen miles more backward and forward, to hear a sermon; after being fatigued with their morning's journey of seven or eight miles, and that performed under a burthen. Indeed worldly cares and occupations, though not bodily labour, break in too often on the religious exercises of the clergy themselves as well as of the people.

Presbyteries are held twice and sometimes thrice a year, for the purpose of drawing up certificates for missionaries, school-masters, and ministers widows, and other business. At these meetings two must make a quorum, as three or four clergymen are not to be found together at the same presbytery, unless compelled to meet by some very urgent affair, or drawn together voluntarily by some common interest. The members of
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the presbyteries in the isles never debate and divide on any question before them, as in the more numerous or popular presbyteries on the main land. There is no opposition made by one minister to the motion of his brother clergyman, whatever it be ; and the other is as complaisant to him in his turn. This mutual complaisance, however, of the reverend gentlemen to one another, may be, and too frequently is, made an engine of oppression towards any person within the precincts of their spiritual jurisdiction, who is so unfortunate as to incur their displeasure. Of such oppression I cannot but give one flagrant and even flagitious example. A private letter, written by a gentleman to a friend on the main land was intercepted. The very reverend gentleman who intercepted it made unjust and malicious commentaries on some lively expressions which it contained, in a presbytery ; subjected the innocent writer of the letter to a presbyterial rebuke ; and lest the injured gentleman should have an opportunity of justifying himself by a fair and consistent explanation of his meaning, committed the letter to the flames.

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Presbyteries are for the most part held at public houses, and continued sometimes without adjournment or prorogation for three successive days and nights. The holy fathers stand in no need of Paul's advice to Timothy respecting his weak stomach. Their zeal in complying with that advice rather stands in need of moderation. In plain English, they are often carried, through the natural exigencies of a moist and cold climate, and their mutual joy at seeing one another, from such distances of space, and after such intervals of time, to great excesses. One may form a judgment of their stile of living at the presbyteries in the Western Hebrides from the bill of fare, for one day, in a place where luxuries, as well as provisions, are so cheap as in Harris. This was no less than one pound sterling per head; or three pounds for the three days that the presbytery lasted. —As the meetings of the presbyteries are, for the most part, scenes of riot, they are attended only by young people of both sexes, who delight in frolic.

Having said so much of Hebridean presbyteries in general, it is justice to observe, that
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the clergy of Lewis attend the meetings of presbyteries regularly : and that these are not attended with such abominable excesses as mark the clerical assemblies in some other quarters. The town of Stornaway is full of strangers passing and repassing, who would be sure to entertain themselves and their acquaintance with a rehearsal of clerical riots, if they had any great handle for doing so. This, no doubt, is a check on the presbytery of Lewis : but, it must be confessed, that a greater decency of character begins to prevail here among the clergy than in the other isles composing the long chain of islands. And it is to be hoped, that the young men lately settled here by Mr. Mackenzie will adhere to the customs, manners, and regulations observed on the main land.

The same general observations here made on the western presbyteries may be justly extended to the synods, if I may judge from what I witnessed at that which met some years ago at Sky, the same defiance of decorum and propriety of conduct ; the same contempt of the rules of the church ; and the same disposition to carry every thing by combination. As one instance of tyranny, in the reverend
synod,

synod, and disregard to the forms of justice, I shall mention one. The minister of Harris wished, as it was supposed, to exclude even as a spectator from the synod, the missionary minister of Harris, his colleague in sacred functions though not settled in the established church, and therefore without a vote in church judicatories. Although it be a rule in the Scottish ecclesiastical, as in all other well constituted Courts of Justice, to hold their sittings, with open doors, and in the face of the world, the established minister, it is said, from his spite against the missionary, had the shameless effrontery to make a motion, that the door of the synod should be shut against all strangers, or all who had not a seat and vote there; which motion was actually carried *nemine contradicente*. The strangers were accordingly dismissed, and the doors of the chamber, where the holy brethren met, locked hard and fast. The infrequency of presbyterial meetings, and the circumstance of their seldom consisting of more than two or three members, is a source of much trouble, vexation, and loss to the missionary ministers supported in the Western Isles by the Royal Bounty. It is a law or rule among the managers of that

charity not to give the missionary his annual stipend, unless he produce a certificate of his good conduct and diligence. Now it is necessary that the missionary should either lie out of his stipend for months after it becomes due, or perform a long journey in quest of those members who do not attend the presbyteries, in order to get their signatures to his certificate. It is impossible for any man to pass through Harris, from island to island, for a signature, all the way to Barray, without losing three weeks time, besides expences. This journey repeated annually, keeps the missionary six weeks from his duty. The same hardships are incurred by schoolmasters on the Royal Bounty,—There should, undoubtedly, be a stated time, annually, when ministers, in order to complete the number of four, for the convenience and benefit of the poor missionaries and schoolmasters, should make it a point of conscience and duty to attend the presbyteries.

The missionaries are neglected, or treated with hardship and unkindness at all hands, except among the poor oppressed people
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among whom they are sent, who have but little time and opportunity allowed them, as has already been observed, to listen to their instructions, and whose humble and hard fortune does not permit them to contribute in any material degree to their comfort and accommodation. They are neglected, and even treated with rigour by the managers of the bounty; and instead of meeting with the countenance and favour of those whom they are sent to assist in the labour of the Lord, they are regarded, if they do their duty, with jealousy and dislike. It is an easy matter, and no uncommon thing among hypocrites, to shew their regard to duty and religion, by a strict adherence to forms, when that adherence, however injurious to others, does not affect their own happiness. Thus we have known political reformers who, without retrenching the enormous emoluments of their own, or the offices of their friends, made a merit of collecting and bringing into the public treasury the paltry clippings taken from poor officers of inferior stations in the public service, whose annual income did not exceed fifty pounds! I knew a missionary clergyman, who, conscious of his

zeal in doing duty, and whose character was universally respected; ventured to send his certificate to the managers at Edinburgh, signed only by the two ministers, who made up the presbytery. A reverend baronet sent it back for more signatures, which put the missionary to a great deal of inconveniency, as well as loss of time and unnecessary expence from dangerous ferries.

It is wonderful that such conscientious managers leave their missionaries unprovided with any fixed habitations, or places of residence, in the different islands they are destined to visit: without which habitations it is impossible that they can promote the end of their mission. In the horrid island of Harris, no place of residence has ever been thought of for the missionary minister, for forty years back, in a district of twenty-seven miles in circuit, besides three islands. The English clergy are remarkably attentive to their missionaries, and grant no relief or assistance to any country or district, unless the inhabitants, on their part, encourage their missionaries, not only with lodging, but also with a certain proportion of their maintenance.

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From the want of fixed habitations, the Hebridean missionaries, if they do their duty, as they sometimes have done, particularly the two last in the Harris district, are obliged to travel, sometimes twenty-four, and sometimes thirty-six miles a day, and that over the most rugged mountains.

I grant, that the journies of the clergyman might sometimes be shortened by navigation. But this could not be done with any degree of regularity, on account of the uncertainty of the weather, and sudden and dangerous squalls, in the fierce Atlantic Ocean, divided, broken, and confined, among islands parted into deep glens and lofty mountains. The good laird of Clanronald, sensible of the miserable situation of the missionaries, has built an excellent house for them in Benbicula, at his own expence.

The natural consequence of the neglect, on the part of the managers of the Royal Bounty, to send intelligent and upright visitors into the isles, who will not be cajoled by the blandishments of either hospitality or of flattery, to inspect the real state of religious

ligious affairs, and the circumstances of the missionary as well as of the country and people. The natural consequence of this neglect, and particularly of sending the missionaries from place to place, like itinerant beggars, without any fixed residence, is, that the subject of their mission is very imperfectly fulfilled, when it is at all, which does not often happen, attended to.

Yet, the most careless and indolent of the missionaries can never be in want of the most ample and formal certificates of their good morals, industry, zeal, and success too, in their clerical functions: nay, agreeably to an observation I have already made, the more careless and indolent the missionary, the more likely he is to conciliate the favour—at least to avoid the displeasure of the established clergy. The missionary of Harris, according to the custom on the main land of Scotland, began to visit, and pray with, and examine the people committed to his charge, from village to village: a practice hitherto unknown in those parts. But that part of his duty he thought it prudent to give up: as it gave offence to his colleague, who considered

considered it as a libel on his own conduct. Neither was the zeal of the missionary liked by the tacksmen, who were unwilling that the people, for any religious purposes, should have the smallest respite from their labour. The missionary being made an object of ridicule, and likely to undergo farther persecution if he persisted in his plans for instructing and consoling the poor oppressed people, by the hopes of religion, chose to accommodate his conduct, in some measure, to the taste of those among whom it was his lot for some time to live.

I shall now say a few words on the subject of the *ELDERS* in those remote regions, having first added to what I have observed concerning that class of men, above, that each parish, according to the constitution, sends what they call a ruling elder to sit, and vote along with the ministers in the presbyteries. *Elders*, in the Hebrides, are, for the most part, mere nominal office-bearers : as they take no concern about the spiritual state of the people ; and, in Kirk Courts vote, or are silent, just as their minister, whose creatures they are, and who increases, or, in fact, (for he cannot formally)

diminishes their number, as it suits his intrigues, chuses to prescribe. Indeed it would be a great curiosity to see men in waiting, praying with, and comforting the sick, and watching over the morals of the people, as in several parts of the Lowlands of Scotland, who are themselves most irregular in their lives, and addicted, as they often, and even for the greater part, especially in Harris, to various kinds of debauchery. As for drunkenness, though sinful and shameful in itself, it may, in some measure, be considered as a vice incident to an almost Hyperborean climate. But among West-Hebridean elders, there is nothing more common than concubinage, fornication, and even adultery.

But from these general remarks on the character and condition of the elders in the West-Hebridean Islands, I must except those of North Uist, among whom are several respectable gentlemen, ornaments to the church. It is observed by a prophet, "As is the people, so are the priests." The converse of this, equally true, may, perhaps, be applied to ministers and elders. "As is the

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the minister, so is his Kirk-Session :” *—for this is of his own modifying and chusing,

I shall here confirm what I have said in general of the *elders* in the Long Island, by a well-known story, which may also, perhaps, be thought to illustrate, in some measure, the state of society in the Western Hebrides among the common order of the people, in respect of delicacy or indelicacy of sentiment. But, as I must, in the course of that story, introduce the name of the minister of Uig in a sort of comical manner, I must premise, that this reverend gentleman is on the whole deservedly respected: he is regular in preaching on Sundays, and on other days he is zealous in the support and promotion of good order in society. He is a terror to evil doers, particularly to dogs, whom, in general, he considers as common thieves: many of those animals, in the Hebrides, being trained to the art of sheep-stealing.

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* The Kirk-Session is the lowest court in the church of Scotland. It consists of the minister and the elders, who meet, and settle little matters relating to the kirk and the poor, every week.

This reverend clergyman incurred no small degree of blame as well as ridicule for inconsiderately marrying an old adulterous clerk, John Harris, of the name of Macaulay, to a base woman whom he knew to be pregnant by another man. That other man wanted to marry the woman, and was very instant in his solicitations for that end. But, as her affections were scattered among the many suitors who applied to her, and seldom altogether, in vain for favours, of whom the old elder was one, she did not well know how to decide upon the matter herself, but referred it to her father and mother. The prudent parents begged the suitor, who believed himself to be the father of the child, to desist from all farther courtship of their daughter, as the old elder was a more eligible match, being richer; assuring him that, with regard to the infant with which she was pregnant, he should not be put to any farther trouble. He persevered. Fond to distraction of the woman, he thought to get rid of the old elder as a rival, by bluntly telling him to his face, that the woman he courted was with-child by himself. The elder was not easily disgusted; but said to the young man,

man, that he would forgive him all the past, on condition that he would not keep company with her in future. But this the other would not promise! alledging many reasons for not forgetting a person with whom he had been so long on terms of the greatest intimacy.

He then went to the minister, to whom he related the whole history of his connection with the woman, from first to last. But, old Macaulay, in defiance of all the remonstrances of the young man, had interest enough with the clergyman, who frequently resided at his house, to perform the ceremony of marriage between him and this infamous woman, and to declare them married persons.

The elder led his bride, far advanced, and bearing the most visible and prominent marks of pregnancy, home to his house. The spectators laughed and jeered as they passed along; but old Macaulay comforted himself amidst all their gibes, by saying, which he did again and again, "This vessel is mine, whoever may claim the cargo."

This *elder* Macaulay had been married before; and in his first wife's life-time kept a concubine in the house with him; by whom he had a daughter. To this daughter, despising his first wife, he committed the charge of his family. A son of his, begotten in adultery, keeps his cattle.

He has given other proofs of licentiousness of the same kind: but no matter! He is rich, hospitable, and extremely useful to the clergymen passing, and repassing his way, in lodging and entertaining them, helping them on their journeys with his boat, &c. He attends the kirk regularly, and keeps on good terms with his minister.

The elders of the islands never appear like those of the main land, at presbyteries or synods, unless they are pressed to come forward, by their minister, on any important occasion, when some measure is to be sanctioned by as many votes as can be well obtained: nor do they ever presume to give their opinion on any question, unless it be asked; and reduceable to a single *aye*, or *no*; or so much as to speak the softest whisper,
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until the bowl comes forward. Then, indeed, they begin to open their throats: and by and by their voice is raised so loud as to be sufficiently heard, and sometimes to drown that of the ministers.

There are in the Long Island two public schools, maintained by the Royal Bounty, besides several schools founded and endowed by private charities; both, from the vast distance between them, and what may be called the seat of their government, Edinburgh, (the residence of the managers, a committee chosen annually by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which meets every year towards the end of May) very much abused.

A sum of twenty-five pounds per annum was granted by the managers of the Royal Bounty, for teaching a grammar school at Stornaway in Lewis. But, during the absence of the late laird of Lewis, Colonel Humberstone Mackenzie, in the East-Indies, the minister of Stornaway had influence enough with the managers of the Bounty to convert the twenty-five pounds into a salary for a missionary,

onary, who might act as an assistant, and ease the minister of part of his parochial duty.

The present H. Mackenzie, moved by the just complaints of the merchants of Stornaway, applied to the managers, and had influence enough to get the money restored to its original purpose.

There is at present a very good school in Stornaway. The parochial fund, or dues, added to the Royal Bounty, make up together a very good livelihood for the schoolmaster. Mr. Mackenzie and the inhabitants of Stornaway very justly considered, that a schoolmaster might be more usefully employed in training up the young, than a missionary in preaching to the old.

The only school in all the Island of Harris is the parish school at Roudle, brought thither from Scarasta, where it stood before, by the late proprietor, when he wanted to collect inhabitants for raising a village. Throughout the whole of the back settlements of Harris, where the poor people have been driven by degrees from the *ma-char*,

chdr, or plain lands, a district of thirty-six miles in length, and from four to five in breadth, all the way from Roudle to Hufkinish, planted thick with inhabitants, the people never once had an offer or opportunity of education for their children, although funds had been provided, and set apart, by the charity of individuals, for that purpose. But the charitable funds were always detained, by the minister, or better sort of people in the isle, and never made their way across the mountains. The nominal charity school-masters, however, had always found means to obtain certificates for the purpose of drawing their salaries, till a half-pay Lieutenant, Lewis Macgregor, alias Drummond, a religious and conscientious man, was sent, about fifteen years ago, as a visitant of the schools, by the managers.

Captain Macgregor finding the poor in Harris grossly ignorant, and wholly neglected, ordered the money to be withdrawn, and recommended it to be employed otherwise.

The money designed to support charity-schools in that country had either been given to natives, who neither troubled themselves
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about the poor, nor were qualified to instruct the children of those in better circumstances : or to strangers, who were stationed either beside the minister, if he had a family, or, if he had not, in the small isles for the benefit of gentlemen's children ; but never either at Tarbat, the most central part, and the most fitted for intercourse in all the Long Island, in the middle of Harris, and in the heart of the real poor, for whom the charity was intended.

A gentleman of the name of Macleod funk, or, according to the Scottish phraseology mortified a yearly sum of twelve pounds to be given to some native of Harris, and of his own name, (Macleod) for teaching the illiterate to repeat the creed and Lord's prayer, and to answer theological questions by rote, in Gâlic, and explain their meaning. But the gentleman, who had interest to secure this money from the managers at Edinburgh, to whom the charge of it is very injudiciously intrusted, has two or more valuable farms to manage ; and therefore cannot spend above a week or a fortnight in the year
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in travelling over the parish, to inquire at the people concerning the attendance of his two substitutes. The one of these is an old blind beggar, of fourscore years and upwards, who is led by the hand by any boy or girl, or other person who will have the good-fels to do so, from village to village, and from door to door. The other is a decrepid changeling, but endowed with a tenacious memory. The minister of Harris married the poor creature to a dirty old trull, who might, if possible, keep him tolerably clean in his person. The disgusting figure of this mendicant teacher of religion may be conceived from the following anecdote :

When the late Sir John Elliot, who resided some time on the island of Harris for the recovery of his health, happened to see this changeling, who intruded into the room in which Sir John was sitting, he was so shocked at his appearance, as to be ready to fall into fits, and instantly ordered him from his presence. What respect such instructors can reflect on religion, and what success they can have in teaching it, it is not difficult to imagine. Each of these worthy substi-

substitutes has the promise from their principal, Macleod, of ten shillings a year; which, however, it is said, is performed only in words. They are literally beggars; and depend for support solely on the alms of the poor people among whom they sojourn. This species of teachers is, in those parts, called *Questars*.

Lord Macdonald has obtained, from the managers of the Royal Bounty, twenty or twenty-five pounds for the establishment of a school in North Uist, which, like that in Stornaway, is united with the parish-school, making together a very comfortable subsistence. The minister of Harris, imitating the policy above mentioned of the minister of Stornaway, attempted to convert this fund into a salary for an assistant to himself in Harris. But his design, through the vigilance of Lord Macdonald and the gentlemen in North Uist, was frustrated.

There were, formerly, two charity-schools in *South Uist*: the one taught by a Mr. Wright, alias Mackintyre; the other by a Mr. Chrystie: both of them strangers, conscientious

scientious and diligent in their proremon. But, being stationed among Roman Catholics, fighting against the stream, and unsupported by the presbytery, who used no means to enforce the conditions on which charity-schools were planted among the inhabitants of that island, they returned to the main land with the melancholy complaint of poverty and neglect. Mr. Chrystie was forced to leave his wife behind him, until Providence should prepare some asylum.

Similar complaints are made, and with equal reason, by the poor charity-schoolmaster of Barra, who is also stationed in the midst of Papists; and whose minister neither gives himself any trouble about the situation of the schoolmaster, nor indeed, could be of much service to him, with his Popish parishioners, by whom he is very little respected, if he did. This poor schoolmaster earnestly wishes to go with his ragged, starved, and most miserable-looking family, to the main land; but he wants the means for transportation.

There was formerly a little school in the Isle of Bernera, until the schoolmaster quitted his charge, and enlisted as a private in the army.

As to the order of

Questars, in the Hebrides, on which I have already touched, that go about from house to house, teaching the children the Creed, the Commandments, &c. by rote, in the evenings, they are not only useless, but many of them worthless drunkards.

There is a blind bully of this order in *Uist*, who, in order to escape contempt, and secure respectful attention both to his person and his doctrines, carries about with him, wherever he goes, loaded pistols. As he is remarkably strong, as well, as full of courage, though blind, few people are fond of grappling with him.

In general, I have to observe on charity-schools, that the fund appropriated to those seminaries are sometimes of great benefit to ministers and tacksmen, who can afford to pay for the education of their children; but
very

very seldom to the poor people for whose benefit they were intended. Indeed there is plainly, a disposition among what is called the better sort of people in the islands, to keep the poor and labouring people in ignorance, that they may be the more tractable and submissive. And, on the whole of this view of the present state of the Western Hebrides, there is one reflection which constantly recurs, and remains uppermost in the mind: namely, that there is, in that unhappy region, a melancholy degree of religious neglect and political oppression. The first of these positions is emphatically proved by the increase of Popery, in those islands, particularly the most southerly of them: the second, by the emigration of the people, whenever they have an opportunity. With all our royal bounties, and private charities, we are not so successful in our religious labours as the Papists: among whom there is sincerity and zeal, and a reciprocal affection between pastor and people.

The synod of Glenelg may save themselves the trouble of asking the missionaries annually what number of Protestants they have

have made ? The answer to which questions, uniformly, is none. A very different answer must be made, if the question were put, How many hearers they had lost ?

I here beg leave to suggest two things to the reverend managers of the Royal Bounty, and the General Assembly, under whose authority they act, both of which seem to be easily practicable. To aim at a general re-form among the clergy, and the settlement of such men only in church livings as would vie with the Popish ministers in the Long Island, in purity of manners, and zeal for the propagation of religion, would be idle and chimerical. But very much depends in such extensive parishes, and among so uncultivated a people, upon the character and conduct of the *elders* in their respective quarters. The ministers of the parishes ought therefore to be strictly enjoined, under pain of suspension, and, in case of contumacy, even of deposition, not to admit, or suffer to remain in their Kirk Sessions, any open and habitual adulterers, whore-mongers, profane swearers, breakers of the Sabbath, extortioners, or oppressors : nor yet, if it be possible

possible to form a shew of Kirk sessions. otherwise, notorious drunkards.

The other hint I would give to the reverend managers, is, to be more careful than they usually have been, who they send to the islands as visitants. The islanders are an acute, shrewd, and penetrating people : they have, particularly, a quick discrimination of character ; and if a man has a weak side, as most men have, they will readily discover it, and practise on it with great success. If avarice be his ruling passion, they will soothe him with such presents as they can make ; if he is addicted to the pleasures of the table, they will ply him incessantly with good cheer and generous liquors ; and, as Dr. Thompson says, if he be notoriously self-conceited, and self-important, they will flatter his vanity.

It has sometimes happened, as I have been told, that the managers, in their choice of a visitant, have been more attentive to the wishes and importunities of certain bustling, restless, and intriguing spirits, who wanted to have a post, and a Summer excursion,

curfion, free of expence, than to the qualities of his mind.

I have heard of a vifitant who had no other motive for foliciting the appointment, than that he wifhed to have a refpite for fome months, from being hen-pecked by his wife. That appointment the clergyman alluded to certainly received, although, what will appear incredible, he was ignorant of the Gâlic tongue.

Let us fuppofe fuch a vifitant arrived in any of the iflands---Harris, for example: ---He is moft hofpitably entertained by the minifter, and the tackfman of Lufkintire, careffed, humoured, cajoled, and flattered, with all manner of adulation. He paffes on to fome other ifle with letters of introduction from thefe gentlemen to their friends, who treat him in the fame manner; and fo on, with letters from them to the lairds, minifters, and tackfmen of fome other ifland. He is kept in a constant round of entertainment, I had almoft faid, of diffipation. He lives with thofe in eafy and affluent circumftances: he hears their tale, and theirs only:

fees only the fair face of things: and, instead of exploring, and feeling for the religious neglect, and civil oppression of the great body of the people, returns home, highly delighted with his jaunt and reception; and is even apt to represent the poor, miserable Æbudæ as the fortunate islands, in the Atlantic Ocean, spoken of by the ancients, although their exact geographical situation had never before been determined.

With regard to the means proper to be used for the gradual abolition of predial servitude in the Hebrides, I have already said, that Government should do every thing, that may be easily done, for the facilitation of the Fisheries, [not only at a few scattered stations,] but throughout the whole range of the various and extensive shores of the islands, wherever commodious creeks and bays, and other inlets of the sea, attract the fishes, and prompt the endeavours of the natives to catch them.

I shall conclude these remarks on the Long Island, by joining my feeble voice to that of

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those

those patriotic and enlightened men who have written, not only against entails, but the excessive monopolization of land, by great farmers. The evil of such a monopolization was obvious to men of candid and liberal minds, in Scotland, more than three hundred years ago. David Stewart, of the family of Lorn, bishop of Murray, from 1458 to 1460, among several good regulations, enacted, "that the common kirk (church) lands be let to none but the labourers of the ground; and that no pensions be paid out of the same."

It would be impracticable, in the present situation and circumstances of society, to adopt and extend the good bishop's law over all the landed property of Great Britain. But, it would well become the wisdom of the Legislature to take such measures as might have a tendency to raise the industrious labourer, from the situation of being a servant to another man, to one in which he might have the satisfaction of cultivating the soil on his own account.



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